

**Processual constructions: towards a non-representational poetics of  
choreography**

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## Abstract

The thesis advances the notion of *non-representational poetics* positioning this as a genealogical extension in the field of conceptual dance. Concerned with “the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself” (Deleuze, 2004: 176) the thesis focuses on modes of thinking by choreographers and performers in developing and performing the works addressed. Acknowledging Dance4’s as yet under articulated support of challenging and experimental choreographic practices in the UK, a *non-representational poetics* is elaborated through an analysis of works programmed in Dance4’s Nottedance Festival 1999-2003, and through practical and written articulation of works by the author developed while Research Artist at Dance4.

Chapter one introduces the multi-modal methods and positions the three text-based elements of works examined - the score for *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen, *The General Rules Score for Project* by Xavier Le Roy and Fiona Templeton’s text for *Invisible Dances* by Bock & Vincenzi - as more-than archival remains. Chapter two presents the contextual and theoretical premise taking Jérôme Bel’s critique of representation (Lepecki, 2007: 45) in the work *Jérôme Bel* as departure point. Chapter three argues that Thomas Lehmen’s *Schreibstück* expands Bel’s critique by exposing the structural and agential processes of a system that is not representational. The following four chapters are dedicated to four works that operate through the activation of agential relational processes: Xavier Le Roy’s *Project*, Bock & Vincenzi’s *Invisible Dances* and the author’s two works *what remains and is to come* (in collaboration with Katrina Brown) and *Perception Frames*. Chapters four to seven respectively argue that: *what remains and is to come* operates through intra-relational material processes, *Project* through social processes that generate collective decision-making, *Invisible Dances* through an ongoing embedding of perceptual sensing processes and *Perception Frames*, through processual instructions for giving attention in perceptual sensing.

The research contributes new knowledge through its articulation of a *non-representational poetics* that operates in the conjoined and processual operations of agency and relations to produce the choreographic work.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to extend warm thanks to all the artists who have worked with me in developing the works that are presented as part of the thesis. Special thanks go to Katrina Brown my collaborator in *what remains and is to come*. Thanks also to Tim Sayer who created the soundscore for this work. The artists who generously contributed their presence and creativity to the development of *Perception Frames* are: through participating in research workshops - Stella Dimitrakopoulou, Kayla Dougan Bowtell, Chris Dugrenier, Antje Hildebrand, Ella Hurman, Adam James, Justyna Janiszewska, Michael Johnson, Samantha Kettle, Evangelia Kolyra, Anastasia Papaeleftheriadou, Jindeok Park, Soyoung Park, Beatrice Perini, Clarissa Sacchelli, Georgia Tegou, Louise Ahl, Greta Heath, Dana MacPherson, Skye Reynolds, Stella Azzurra, Katrina Brown, Rebecca D'Andrea, Alicia Grace, Mark Leahy, Helen MacPhee, Emma Louvelle, Noel Perkins, Sara Reed, Ella Tighe, Julie Havelund, Keryn Ng Gek Theng, Anna Panzone; through sharing time and conversations with me in the studio in a one-to-one situation - Traci Kelly, Sioned Huws; through independently testing out the scores in their development - Jenny Hill, Vida Midgelow and Quick Shift members Sally Doughty, Miriam Keye, Eleanor Walker, Jill Cowley. Special thanks also to Julie Brixey-Williams, who worked with practice frame 10 of *Perception Frames* to create the drawing *Density and Porousness no 1* and for permission to reproduce the drawing in the publication.

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## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the text to indicate country of origin and/or residence of the artists of works discussed:

AT	Austria
AU	Australia
BE	Belgium
CH	Switzerland
CL	Chile
CN	China
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
ES	Spain
FR	France
HU	Hungary
IN	India
IT	Italy
JP	Japan
NL	Netherland
NO	Norway
PT	Portugal
RU	Russia
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
ZW	Zimbabwe

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Preface // note to reader

The text contains a range of written registers and perspectives including self-interviews that have been carried out at various stages of the research. The self-interviews are inserted into the text that follows, with the first insertion appearing in the introduction. The reader is asked to 'accept' the shifts in writing mode that occur prior to the discussion on method in chapter one, to read in the shifting perspectives of a research practice that has inquired through multiple modes without (yet) knowing where those multiplicities might lead.

The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same:  
the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself  
and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself.

(Deleuze, 2004: 176)

## Introduction

This practice led, mixed mode research project is developed under the auspice of an Arts and Humanities Research Council Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) with the UK dance organization, Dance4. The research is approached through my own practice while Research Artist at Dance4 and through an examination of the work of several artists programmed by Dance4 in their international dance festival Nottedance. Two works are presented as part of the thesis: *what remains and is to come*, a performance installation in collaboration with choreographer Katrina Brown, and *Perception Frames*, choreographic scores for practice and performance. *Perception Frames* is submitted with this written element; *what remains and is to come* was examined on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at Backlit Gallery, Nottingham. Three works that were presented at Nottedance are addressed: *Invisible Dances* by Bock & Vincenzi (UK), *Project* by Xavier Le Roy (FR/DE) and *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen (DE). The works that are examined in and presented as part of the thesis belong with, and extend from, the new movement in western contemporary dance that emerged in 1990s continental Europe, known as conceptual dance.<sup>2</sup> Proposing a development within conceptual dance from the staging of a critique of representation to a mode of practice that functions in a more generative register, the thesis advances the notion of *non-representational poetics* positioning this as a genealogical extension in the field of conceptual dance.

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<sup>2</sup> A discussion on the use of this term is in chapter two pages 51-54.

Rather than addressing representation to expose the limits of, and modes of deviation from, representation, this project addresses choreographic practices that operate other-than through representational orders of thinking. The thesis considers various modes of thinking engendered in the development and performing of the works addressed. It identifies approaches that operate through the activation of specific processes, which are different to each project, with this activation operating to 'produce' the work.

Further artefacts are presented with the written thesis. These include DVD documentation of a performance of the work *what remains and is to come*<sup>3</sup> and the book publication *what remains and is to come: a document* (Brown & Irvine, 2014). It is the actual performance of *what remains and is to come* (rather than the documentation) that is submitted as a component of the thesis. The two artefacts associated with the work are submitted as supporting documents selected as they enable a level of access to the work at this post-performance stage of submitting the written thesis. Interviews undertaken as part of the research have been transcribed and are included as appendices to the thesis. There is an interview with Jane Greenfield who was Artistic Director of Dance4 during the period in which conceptual dance was first programmed in Nottdance and whose contribution to the organization has not as yet been articulated. There are also interviews with Frank Bock, Simon Vincenzi and Fiona Templeton on their work in the piece *Invisible Dances*. Limited information on their working methods during this project is in the public domain, which is the reason for their inclusion here. These interviews are in themselves a unique contribution to the field of dance.

The context of the CDA has informed the approach to and methods of research. The CDA was designed, prior to my involvement, to address an aspect of the legacy of Dance4 and furthermore that this be addressed through practice as

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<sup>3</sup> This performance was at KARST Gallery, Plymouth on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

research. In responding to this remit I have acknowledged Dance4's as yet little articulated programming of international choreographers in Nottdance Festival and in particular its extensive programming of European conceptual dance prior to other UK programmers. Conceptual dance has been the term under which significant developments in western contemporary dance, since the mid 1990s in continental Europe to the time of writing in 2014, has been articulated. Writers who have used this term include Johannes Birringer (2005), André Lepecki (2006), Clare Bishop (2009), Una Bauer (2010) and Jeroen Fabius (2012). That it remains a contested term is acknowledged, and is addressed on pages 51-54. Many choreographers, myself included, associate themselves with the concerns of this movement. Therefore my approach to the research has been two-fold: through an address to the Nottdance archive and through my own practice.

The thesis addresses the writings of particular theorists who are inquiring into a similar set of concerns with possibilities for thinking that is not founded on representationalist modes. The writing draws from the fields of dance and performance studies and also from a range of writers whose concerns are understood as resonant with those of the choreographic practices. These writers include feminist theorist and science philosopher Karen Barad, science philosopher Isabelle Stengers, philosopher, artist and dancer Erin Manning and philosopher and cultural theorist Brian Massumi, who are introduced in chapter two. While drawing out particular concurrences of concerns and felt resonances, the writing purposefully attempts to elude the tendency to explain arts practice through the conceptual frames of another practice. Rather the choreographic thinking is considered alongside the concerns of these theorists.

### ***Non-representational poetics and thinking***

My use of the term *poetics* aligns with Ric Allsopp's "poetics used as a cross-disciplinary term for approaches to composition and the processes and contexts

through which artworks take place” (Allsopp, 2007: 1). I want to stress that my use of *poetics* addresses compositional approaches and processes of practice from the working perspectives of choreographer and performer. This differs from French dance theorist Laurence Louppe for whom “a poetics seeks to define and uncover in a work of art what touches us, animates our sensibilities, and resonates in our imagination” (Louppe, 2010: 3). Her articulation of poetics is from a spectatorial perspective; it is concerned with the audience’s experience of the work of art. In contrast *poetics* as I use it, is about the *how* of creative production as experienced by choreographers and performers. It is concerned with the processes of making or generating work and the processes of doing or performing work.

In developing a *non-representational poetics* I take philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s challenge to representational modes of thinking, his call for “the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself” (Deleuze, 2004: 176) as provocation, orientating it to choreographic practice. The “image of thought” that for Deleuze troubles western philosophy and which he seeks to avoid is that which “rests its beginning upon [...] implicit or subjective presuppositions” (Deleuze, 2004: 165). He suggests that the form that implicit or subjective presuppositions take includes “everbody knows what it means to think” (Deleuze, 2004: 165) arguing (critically) that what the philosopher “proposes as universally recognised is what is meant by thinking, being and self – in other words not a particular this or that but the form of representation or recognition in general” (Deleuze, 2004: 166). Here Deleuze is suggesting that implicit or subjective presupposition with regard to what ‘thinking’ is, limits ‘thinking’ to the operations of recognition such that ‘thinking’ (re)produces what already exists in/as thought. This is the form of representational thinking.

This thesis does not aspire to contribute to the discipline of philosophy as such, rather to draw *from* Deleuze's challenge to thinking - to turn the question of how to begin to think without recourse to recognition and the allegiance to representation that recognition entails to creative production in the field of choreography. *Non-representational poetics* refers to compositional approaches that seek to elude (or at least limit) presuppositions by those who are party to the work's making. Approaches to composition that orientate or 'force' performers' and choreographers' thinking in ways other-than through recognition are of particular import.

Allsopp's definition of poetics, cited above, is presented in his discussion of contemporary approaches to open form composition where he suggests:

The poetics of open work [...] has had a pervasive influence throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century particularly through avant-garde, neo-avant-garde and experimental work, and is now thoroughly absorbed and assimilated into the wider field of contemporary arts practice.

(Allsopp, 2007: 2)

The various works that are developed and addressed in this thesis, all of which can be understood as experimental, open form compositions, are I suggest testament to this absorption and assimilation. In the *non-representational poetics* that I develop in this thesis I pull forward a particular feature. This concerns specific constraints on performer and choreographer 'thinking' operating as a component of the open form; it is the constraining of performer and choreographer 'thinking', such that thinking operates other-than through representational modes, that is examined and articulated in this thesis and positioned as a *non-representational* approach to composition.

Here I wish to highlight the particular concern with ‘thinking’ that this research addresses and to distinguish representational (or non-representational) works (as viewed by the spectator) from the question of representational and *non-representational* thinking on the part of performer and choreographer in the making and performing of works. While it is acknowledged that these are not mutually exclusive issues, and that the works developed and addressed in this thesis (potentially) problematize representational engagement in the spectating of them, it is questions of *non-representational* thinking in the making and performing of them that this research primarily seeks to illuminate.

Issues around representation and thinking are also of concern to critical theorist and performance maker Bojana Cvejić, whose recent thesis shares important concerns with my thesis. Both address late 20<sup>th</sup> century / early 21<sup>st</sup> century European conceptual dance works; both work *from* Deleuze’s critique of representation to articulate how the works exceed representational regimes. While there are concerns ‘in common’, our methodological approaches to these concerns, and our subsequent contributions to knowledge, are different. In order to illuminate the particular thrust of my own research and to clarify my positioning of *non-representational* thinking at the outset of this written thesis a description of our diverging approaches follows.

For Cvejić, philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s critique of representation is “the most appropriate framework to interpret the critical departure” (Cvejić, 2013: 32) of a range of recent European choreographic works: works of which their choreographers have stated that it was their intention to “examine the regime of representation in contemporary (theatrical) dance” Cvejić, 2013: 31).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cvejić addresses seven works, all associated with the conceptual dance movement, developed between 1998 and 2007: *Self unfinished* and *Untitled* by Xavier Le Roy, *Weak Dance Strong Questions* by Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema, *héâter-élévision* by Boris Charmatz, *Nvsbl* by Eszter Salamon, *50/50* by Mette Ingvartsen, and *It’s In The Air* by Ingvartsen and Jefta van Dinther.



Drawing on the same quote from Deleuze that opens the present thesis (and re-presented here):

The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same:  
the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself  
and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself

(Deleuze, 2004: 176)

Cvejić argues that the creation of the works she examines “can be appropriately accounted for by what Deleuze describes as ‘the destruction of an image of thought,’ which is the very same condition ‘of a true critique and a true creation’” (Cvejić, 2013: 32). Having firstly noted that each of the choreographers begins by formulating a problem, Cvejić “expand[s] the idea underlying the problem by creating concepts that aren't the thought *of* the choreographer, in spite of their being related to it, but *of* the performance” (Cvejić, 2013: 19, emphasis in original). Her approach to “creating concepts” is “largely *rooted* in Deleuze’s (and Spinoza’s) philosophy” (Cvejić 2013, 19-20, emphasis added). Through careful philosophical analysis while remaining “mindful of the danger of exemplifying philosophical concepts through performance” (Cvejić, 2013: 29) she develops a philosophical account of how the works she examines “give rise to distinctive concepts” (Cvejić, 2013: 2). Claiming that the works “‘force’ thinking [...] beyond recognition [she states that] they cannot be accounted for by representational notions of thought” (Cvejić, 2013: 32). The philosophical account that Cvejić offers is an other-than representational ‘reading’ of what the works ‘do’ in performance, in their “giv[ing] rise to distinctive concepts” (Cvejić, 2013: 2); *rooted* in a body of philosophical discourse her thesis is a radical contribution to performance philosophy and spectator studies.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cvejić writes that each of the choreographers begins by “posing questions that sweep away any presuppositions to be had about given or familiar conditions or terms” (Cvejić, 2013: 53). She notes that “the questions relate to a past, in the sense of problematizing the knowledge in

While seeking to speak to the field of performance philosophy and sharing Cvejić's concerns with Deleuze's "destruction of an image of thought" (Deleuze, 2004: 176) and the 'forcing' of thinking beyond recognition, my methodological approach differs from that of her philosophical analysis. My approach is that of the artist-researcher who seeks to develop and articulate conditions that 'force' thinking as part of the conditions of creative production. In particular this relates to performers' and choreographers' thinking in the making and performing of the works. While Cvejić's approach is 'rooted' in Deleuze's philosophy, my approach takes Deleuze's "destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself" (Deleuze, 2004: 176) as *provocation* - orientating this provocation to the conditions of production of the choreographic work(s). The approach *invites* the force of Deleuze's "genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself" (2004: 176) and the associated urge to think without recourse to recognition, into my own practical/creative research as an invocation to think other-than through representational regimes. This approach has given rise to the two creative works as research outcomes: *what remains and is to come* and *Perception Frames*. I also interrogate the conditions that 'force' performer and choreographer thinking without recourse to recognition in the artists' works that I examine.

In introducing the term *non-representational poetics* I am privileging the perspective of choreographer and performer. The *poetics of non-representational poetics* (as noted above, page 4) refers to approaches to composition from the perspective of performer and choreographer. The *non-representational* of this term refers to modes of thinking (by choreographer and

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which the bodily movement can be perceived and recognized, one that the choreographers identify in the field [of] contemporary dance and/or in their previous works" (Cvejić, 2013: 53). While it seems to me that this may in some cases 'force' choreographers' and performers' thinking in a *non-representational* register (in the manner proposed in my own thesis), it is the way that the choreographers' "questions" cause bodily movement to be "perceived and recognized" – or rather not "recognized" - by the spectator so "forcing" thinking in the reception of the work that Cvejić primarily addresses.

performer) that operate other-than through recognition, modes that ‘force’ thinking towards (the possibilities of) Deleuze’s “genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself” (Deleuze, 2004: 176). The context for this is such that the orientation of thinking is in creative acts: *acts of thinking*, in dance and choreographic practice. It is evident therefore that the research addresses thinking as an occurring event, and that it implicates processes. Moreover, the research addresses thinking as a generative event. *Non-representational poetics* refers to processes of and for composing and performing choreography, that operate through (performers’ and choreographers’) *acts of thinking* that are generative of the choreographic work.

***Would you say that the issue of the work’s coming-into-being is a key of sorts in your research?***

*I prefer not to think metaphorically. Metaphor already belongs within a representationalist mode of thinking. I prefer not to think of anything being a ‘key’ that will open to something that is already there waiting to be discovered. Recognition operates in this way of ‘seeing’ what is already ‘there’ but only just noticed. I’m trying to let something arise that wasn’t ‘there’ before. So yes, the moment of something appearing or ‘coming-into-being’ is definitely of interest. I’d say the research is about ‘how’ appearing happens - how appearing happens in the activity of doing and making choreography – how a movement or action arises. And I am interested in the possibility of appearing that is non-founded, which would involve not knowing in advance what that appearing might be. I am interested in how the moment of appearing can be perceptibly felt, and in what it produces – what*

*comes-into-being. The research is about creative processes, making and doing choreography.*

***What's the connection with this 'appearing' and non-representational poetics?***

*It's something to do with relations, with arising in relations ...*

*I've been thinking a lot about how representational ways of thinking can to a large extent already pre-suppose what is possible. Conceptual dance has been associated with a critique of representation,<sup>6</sup> with ways of working that expose and so undermine representational operations. In my practice I've been trying to find ways that operate, and in terms of art making, produce, in a non-representational register. What has come forward in this is relations - a producing in relations. It seems to me that this is the first condition for a non-representational poetics, that lets us escape an insistence on our own subjective position, that lets us escape an already knowing what we want. It's a particular quality of relations. To a large extent the research has been a quest towards the particulars of a relational constraint that is capable of not pre-supposing what can occur when a relation is activated. The activation of the relation, which is by necessity a process, becomes the means through which producing happens.*

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<sup>6</sup> This refers to André Lepecki's (2006: 45) and Una Bauer's (2008a: 39) discussions on *Jérôme Bel* (1995) by Jérôme Bel as operating through critique of representation. See chapter two pages 47-51 where this is addressed.

*Producing happening in this way is experienced as an  
'appearing.' It comes out of a relation being activated.*

(Irvine, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013)

These words written in the context of creative practice, position dance and choreography as capable of addressing philosophical concerns associated with thinking through choreographic practice itself. Concurring with a contextual and cultural approach, rather than a formal or aesthetic approach, it asserts the practice of making choreographic works as a site for research, for knowledge production and for knowledge dissemination. Performance Studies scholar Susan Melrose has noted that critical discourse has tended to read performance practices from a spectatorial perspective (Melrose, 2006: 98). My approach offers an alternative articulation, suggesting other ways of understanding the creative processes through which the works addressed operate. It offers articulations from the perspective of the artists undertaking the practices. This includes both my own perspective as an artist as well as that of artists who are party to the other works addressed in this thesis. It is my perspective as artist, or perhaps more accurately artist-researcher - which includes my creative and theoretical interests as articulated in the self-interview above - that has functioned as a lens through which I have approached Dance4's past programming, and for the selection of the three works that I examine in this thesis.

The works selected share a concern with research and with experimentation. The extent of Dance4's ongoing commitment to research and experimental practices – with my own research being an example of that - extends from the early days of Dance4 when it was one of many National Dance Agencies that grew up in Britain in the 1990s. These agencies were to have a particular influence on the development of dance in the UK. In order to locate Dance4's

position in that sector, a brief history of the introduction of Dance Agencies and the early days of Dance4 follows.

#### **A short history of UK Dance Agencies and the early days of Dance4**

In 1990, the Arts Council initiated and funded Dance Agencies whose remit concerned the development of, and infrastructure for, dance activities.<sup>7</sup> By 2009 the number of UK Dance Agencies had grown to thirty-seven (Burns & Harrison, 2009: 270), which indicates the influence of these agencies on the dance culture in UK.

Arts Council England define Dance Agency as:

An organisation whose purposes include: developing opportunities for engagement with dance by providing information, resources, safe-houses for dance artists, the provision of dance classes and education programmes, community dance provision, infrastructure development, business development, training and professional development and, in the case of some agencies, dance commissioning and production, touring, and the presentation of performance independently and with partners.

(Burns & Harrison, 2009: 22)

Dance4 was formed by a voluntary steering group, in Leicester in the East Midlands in England, led by Pat Abraham who was to become Executive Director of the organization (Emmett, 2012).<sup>8</sup> When applying for Dance Agency status in 1991 the group also applied to deliver the Arts Council funded Year of Dance in 1993. (This latter was a yearly project in which a different art form was nominated by the Arts Council and organizations applied to deliver a national programme for that art form.) The steering group was successful in both applications. Dance4's initial focus for the first two years was the programming and delivery of the Year of Dance, which was carried out under the artistic

<sup>7</sup> It was only in 1984 that Dance began to be treated as an independent field by the Arts Council (Burns & Harrison, 2009: 29). Prior to that the Arts Council managed dance alongside music.

<sup>8</sup> The information in this and subsequent paragraphs of this section, unless otherwise cited, was provided by Dance4 office manager Rachel Emmett (2012) who has worked at the organization since its inception in 1991 - continuing to do so at the time of writing.

direction of Val Bourne (who was already well known at this time as Artistic Director of Dance Umbrella.)

Following the Year of Dance in 1993 there were many changes. Pat Abraham left Dance4. Val Bourne was no longer with the organization - having been appointed exclusively for the Year of Dance project. Dance4 moved from Leicester to Nottingham and Jane Greenfield was appointed Artistic Director. The task of considering Dance4's role, and its particular vision as a National Dance Agency began.

Jane Greenfield's ambitions for Dance4 included that the organization become more "recognized" (Greenfield, 2011: 200. Interview with author. See appendix 1) and grew from her sense that British dance in the 1990s - with particular exceptions including Rosemary Butcher, Jonathan Burrows, La Ribot, Wendy Houston and Javier de Frutos whom she consistently programmed - was "rather mundane" (Greenfield, 2011: 205. Interview with author. See appendix 1). She turned to work from continental Europe of which she has said:

This work is good work. This work is a breath of fresh air. This work needs to be here and sit next to this rather mundane British dance, and it needs to show up British dance. [...] We need to have this work in the UK.

(Greenfield, 2011: 205  
Interview with author. See appendix 1)

Noting that "there was no dedicated festival platform for that kind of newer, more experimental kind of work, this kind of new area of dance and choreography" (Greenfield, 2011: 200. Interview with author. See appendix 1) Greenfield began to programme the work in Nottdance Festival. With this, Dance4's position in the field of British dance was announced as the organization that looked beyond UK boundaries and that supported artistic research and experimentation.

### **Dance4 – the experimental dance organization**

What Greenfield called a “new area of dance and choreography” (Greenfield, 2011: 200. Interview with author. See appendix 1) was otherwise known as conceptual dance. It was Dance4, along with Yorkshire Dance under the direction of Bush Hartshorn, who introduced this work to British dance audiences with the programming of *Jérôme Bel* (1995) by Jérôme Bel (FR) in 1999 (Greenfield, 2011: 200. Interview with author. See appendix 1).<sup>9</sup> This was the beginning of Dance4’s ongoing support for the work with Bel being programmed again in 2000, 2001, 2004 and 2005. Other conceptual dance artists programmed during Greenfield’s directorship includes Thomas Lehmen (2002, 2003), Xavier Le Roy (2004), Jonathan Burrows (1999, 2002, 2003)<sup>10</sup> and La Ribot (1998, 1999, 2001, 2003).<sup>11</sup>

As noted above (page 13), Greenfield, also programmed British artists in Nottdance - artists whose work fulfilled the “spirit” and “aesthetic” of Nottdance (Greenfield, 2011: 202. Interview with author. See appendix 1). She also established the Lines of Enquiry residency programme for artist research and development, a programme that supported the production and development of Bock & Vincenzi’s *Invisible Dances*. Greenfield led the organization for eleven years and was the key figure in establishing Dance4’s

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<sup>9</sup> Hartshorn had previously introduced *Jérôme Bel* (Bel 1995) to the UK in 1996 when he was artistic director of The Green Rooms in Manchester. This was an experimental theatre / performance venue and not part of the dance circuit. As Artistic Director of Yorkshire Dance, Hartshorn programmed the piece in Leeds on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1999, four days before the Nottdance performance on 15<sup>th</sup> May. The first London performance by Bel was two days later on 17<sup>th</sup> May at ICA. Greenfield was to later join forces with Hartshorn, and others to form a network of producers, which is discussed on page 46.

<sup>10</sup> UK choreographer Jonathan Burrows became associated with conceptual dance as his work moved away from the company model of choreographing work towards collaborative working with one other artist beginning with the work in collaboration with Jan Ritsma *Weak Dance Strong Questions* (2001) programmed in Nottdance in 2002. The main focus of his work at the time of writing is the collaboration with Matteo Fargion (Burrows, 2014a). Burrows continues to be programmed by Dance4 most recently at Nottdance 2013 with the work in collaboration with Matteo Fargion *One Flute Note* (2011).

<sup>11</sup> The years cited – here and later - for works programmed in Nottdance Festival have been provided by Dance4 unless otherwise indicated.



position as an international organization that supports challenging and experimental dance practices.

In 2005, Nicky Molloy was appointed Artistic Director - with Eva Martinez as Artistic Programme Manager. Martinez notes continuity from Greenfield's concerns as well as an increased attention to artist development - including the initiation of the Associate Artist Programme and Europe in Motion an international programme for emerging artist development<sup>12</sup> (Martinez, 2012. Interview with author). Conceptual dance artists programmed during this period include Eszter Salamon (HU) in 2007, Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion (UK) in 2006 and 2007, La Ribot (UK/ES) in 2006 and Thomas Lehmen (DE) in 2006, 2007 and 2008). Molloy also continued to support Bock & Vincenzi's work with the programming of Act 111 of *Invisible Dances: Here, As If They Hadn't Been, As If They Are Not* in Nottdance 2006.

There was also a drive to bring together the various strands of the organization - artistic programming, community provision and artist development (Martinez, 2012. Interview with author). This drive was addressed in the Nottdance 2008 programming with an audience panel and young persons' panel selecting work to be programmed (Martinez, 2012. Interview with author) as well as through sharings of works by the artists in the Europe in Motion programme and with these sharings being followed by dialogues with the audience (Nottdance Brochure 2008: 20-21).

Under the artistic direction of Paul Russ from 2009, Dance4 continues the legacy of Greenfield and Molloy. At the time of writing in summer 2014, Dance4's website states: "We are an internationally recognised, experimental dance organisation [...] with a unique voice in the UK dance sector" (Dance4, no

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<sup>12</sup> During this period as part of Europe in Motion, Dance4 worked in partnership with Springdance Utrecht, Holland and National Dance Centre Bucharest, Romania (Dance4 2008: 20).

date). Russ has brought to his role a particular intention towards supporting and creating contexts for research. This includes an extended commitment to the pool of Associate Artists, undertaking to work with them “for at least four years because we want to really invest in their research” (Russ, 2011: 22:03-22:11). Nicola Conibere is an associate artist who identifies her work as experimental (Conibere, 2012) and whose pieces *The Beckoning and the Ecapades* (2008) and *Assembly* (2013) were programmed in Nottdance in 2011 and 2013 respectively.

In conversation with me in 2011, Russ said that he has made the decision to do “less festival type presentations [from 2011 Nottdance has become a biannual rather than annual festival] in order to ensure that we give more attention to the process of supporting and creating research. And I think that might result in finding new things that maybe defy what Dance4 is presently known for” (Russ, 2011: 21:03-21:38).

During Russ’s ongoing tenure, Dance4 has extended their understanding of artistic research to encompass working in partnership with the university sector. This Collaborative Doctoral Award, in which I am one of two Research Artists supported in ways similar to the Associate Artists, is an example of that.<sup>13</sup> Dance4 currently works with artists both within and outside of academic contexts and beyond their Associate Artist and Research Artist schemes through commissioning new work, providing residencies and offering research opportunities. This research-driven approach involves working with artists who continue in different ways to build on conceptual dance including Colette Saddler (UK), Louise Ahl (UK/SE), Nicola Conibere (UK) (who was noted above, this page) and Rodrigo Sobarzo (CL/NL) who were programmed in the most recent Nottdance festival in 2013 (Dance4 2013: unpaginated).

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<sup>13</sup> My project is one of two AHRC funded PhDs. The other PhD project has been undertaken by choreographer Sara Giddens.

**The non-signature choreography of a *non-representational poetics***

The research based and experimental mode of my own practice – and specifically its orientation in *non-representational* modes of thinking - has given rise to a particular attribute of my creative output within this project. The two works that are presented as part of the thesis, *what remains and is to come*, in collaboration with Katrina Brown and *Perception Frames* are in many ways dissimilar. They do not conform to the notion of signature choreography, which assumes that a choreographer's output carries a particular and recognizable mark. The two works, outwardly at least, do not carry a common mark. *what remains and is to come* works with paper, charcoal, body and breath in the live event, leaving behind an installed presence of large charcoal prints. *Perception Frames* is a collection of written scores for framing attention in ways that give rise to movement that is not pre-planned. The outward lack of signature is consequent on the *non-representational* mode of working that strives, in each particular situation of working, towards what is not already known and so repeatable as a common mark.

However, a similarity may be noted in the way that each work is concerned with processes that are specifically constrained: processes that in their activation produce the choreographic event. This feature is itself consequent on the *non-representational* drive of the research. It is a feature of all of the works that are addressed in this thesis.

**Overview of chapters**

The research has involved a simultaneous investigation into the conditions for a *non-representational poetics* through practical investigation in my own creative practice and through analysis of works and approaches by artists who performed at Nottdance Festival. The thesis addresses approaches to making and approaches to performing. In particular it articulates *how* the works are

variously premised on the activation of particular processes *as* the works coming into being.

Chapter one outlines the methodological approach and the multi-modal research methods undertaken. It introduces the three works that are examined as part of the thesis through the textual component that, I argue in each case, offers a direct means to access and to activate the works in a present time. These texts are the score for *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen (2002a), *The General Rules Score for Project* by Xavier Le Roy (2010) and Fiona Templeton's text for *Invisible Dances* by Bock & Vincenzi (2004a). While each is a document of past works, the chapter re-frames them as more-than archival remains. A common feature of these, and of my own two works *what remains and is to come* and *Perception Frames* is identified. This is that each is a record or recording *of or for* processes. It is suggested that the constraining attributes through which these various records/recordings operate are aspects of a *non-representational poetics* - a suggestion that is examined more closely in relation to each work in chapters three to seven.

Chapter two discusses the first programming of conceptual dance at Nottdance Festival, *Jérôme Bel* (1995) by Jérôme Bel in 1999, a work that has been associated with the critique of representation (Lepecki, 2007: 45, 49); (Bauer, 2010: 63). I argue that Bel works with representation to expose processes of representation and that within this the performers remain his representatives. The genealogical link from Bel is acknowledged and his critique of representation is taken as a departure point. The chapter then focuses more particularly towards the *non-representational* drive of the thesis. The notion of agential-relations is introduced as a critical component of *non-representational* thinking.

Chapter three discusses *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen, as a system that extends Bel's critique in that it affords agency to the various components of that system. I argue that each of those various components acts with a level of autonomy that functions in the system's operations for a (re)producing of the work.

Chapter four reports on the emergence of a particular systematic approach in working with materials in my work in collaboration with Katrina Brown *what remains and is to come*. This performance installation stages the activation of material relational processes *as* the work. The chapter theorizes the event of intra-relations as the genus of the work that is produced.

Chapter five discusses the four written scores for Xavier Le Roy's *Project* and gives an account of the research workshop 'towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' in which I undertook a re-activation of *The General Rules Score*. This practice as research method, conducted with seventeen participants, was my means of inquiring into that written score. The chapter highlights the way that social processes are activated via this score *for* producing and how decisions were experienced as arising in relations. It also identifies an orientation of attention for thinking *in* perception that contributes to a *non-representational* intent that is brought forward in the chapters that follow.

Chapter six discusses Bock & Vincenzi's *Invisible Dances*, initially through a reading of Fiona Templeton's text in the book publication *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* (Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a). It suggests that the mode of construction of *Invisible Dances* is one that embeds perceptual sensing processes through time. Templeton's text, I argue, is one layer of that embedding that, in turn, forces on the reader a perceptibility of the processes of her own making sense in the act of reading.

Chapter seven introduces my work *Perception Frames*, a collection of choreographic scores for practice and performance. It discusses how the scores constrain attention and heighten perceptual experience. I suggest that the delineation of constraints generate conditions by which the performer may be brought into a perceptibly experienced mutuality of thought and action – through which there is a producing of a choreographic event.

### **Conclusion**

The aspect of Dance4's legacy that is brought forward in the research is the programming and support of works from continental Europe and the UK that extend from the critique of representation. This thesis proposes that the works addressed can be understood as part of a critical development in western contemporary dance that is concerned with a *non-representational* impetus. Each of the works is premised on a mode of construction in which there is a necessity for the activation of a (particular) set of processes for the work's coming-into-being. Each work has the potential for a future activation that is always a particular producing of the work.

The thesis asserts a *non-representational poetics* of choreography as one that makes perceptible the coming-into-being of the choreographic work in the event of its doing and of its making through the activation of particular agential-relational processes that are specific to each project. These processes variously orientate choreographer and performer towards modes of thinking that operate through *non-representational* means.

This research engages with the intertwining of choreographic practices and philosophical thinking. It is a contribution to dance and performance studies and to the emerging field of performance philosophy through its practice led articulation of choreographic practices and of processes that are concerned with *non-representational* modes of thinking.

## Chapter 1

### Methodology, practices and archive

#### Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodological approach and the multi-modal research methods undertaken. Methods have included practice as research through my own choreographic practice and an examination of works programmed by Dance4 in their Nottedance Festival.

Three works programmed in Nottedance are introduced via three written texts. These texts variously exist as records and recordings of past performances and as aspects of larger projects. They are the written score for the performance *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen (2002a); *The General Rules Score* for the performance work *Project* by Xavier Le Roy (2010) and Fiona Templeton's text for Bock & Vincenzi's *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* (2004a). Reframing the texts as more-than archival remains, this chapter argues that while they exist as records of past works, they are not simply remains. Each text is, in a particular way and in a present encounter with it, capable of activating further processes that in turn bring the performance works (again and differently) into being.

This chapter also gives an initial outlining of the way that modes of recording operate in my two works that are presented as part of the thesis - *Perception Frames* and the work in collaboration with Katrina Brown - *what remains and is to come*. A common feature is identified in all five works: the records that remain are records *of and for* processes. I argue that this is a feature of the way that the works are processually constructed. In each case the processes undertaken, and which are capable of further activation, operate through defined contours that are constrained in specific ways and, at the same time,

are open with regard to outcome. How this contributes to a *non-representational poetics* is introduced briefly in this chapter and elaborated more fully in the chapters that follow.

### **On Notteddance, Jane Greenfield and “a right constellation”**

My initial approach to works programmed in Notteddance was ‘global’ through identifying the artists and titles of works presented at Notteddance - a task facilitated by Dance4’s existing ‘Notteddance Archive’, an unpublished excel spreadsheet listing works presented, the choreographer and country of origin as well as the year presented. Other useful resources included the past Notteddance programmes and Dance4’s video library of works performed at Notteddance. Although not all of the programmed works were documented, the video records did enable me to gain an impression of a range of works that I had not previously encountered. It was evident through this initial research that a significant shift occurred in the programming of Notteddance from 1999, when European conceptual choreography was first presented at the festival. As noted on page 2, this was during the period that Jane Greenfield was Artistic Director; it was the beginning of an ongoing commitment on the part of Dance4 to supporting new experimental developments in European dance. Dance4 continued to programme conceptual choreographers introducing their work to British dance audiences prior to other programmers. What were the conditions that made such a radical move possible in a small East Midland city a two-hour train ride from London? The interview I carried out with Jane Greenfield casts light on this. Greenfield indicates that her background was part of those conditions. So too was the city itself (Greenfield, 2011: 199. Interview with author. See appendix 1).

Greenfield trained in dance in the 1980s at Leicester Polytechnic College (now De Montfort University) “where the dance degree dramatically changed overnight and the work [became] much more experimental” (Greenfield, 2011:



199. Interview with author. See appendix 1). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, and following a period in community dance and education, she worked at Nottingham Playhouse when Ruth Mackenzie was the Chief Executive. According to Greenfield during this time “the Playhouse had an incredible kind of international presence. And some incredible work was being brought over, so it really opened my eyes” (Greenfield, 2011: 199. Interview with author. See appendix 1). Artists programmed during that time and whom she cites include playwright Alan Bleasdale (UK), the theatre group Maly Theatre of St Petersburg (RU), multi-disciplinary artist Meredith Monk (US) and choreographer Michael Clark (UK). Greenfield saw all this as “very good grounding” for her work at Dance4 (Greenfield, 2011: 199. Interview with author. See appendix 1). Greenfield and her team worked to secure funding to gradually grow the festival from its beginnings as a weekend festival of “young” and “regional work” to an international festival that introduced British audience’s to experimental and arguably groundbreaking dance works – a festival that continues to attract artists and audiences regionally, nationally and internationally to Nottingham.

Speaking of her time at Dance4, Greenfield says:

Nottingham at that time was an amazing place. There was the Nottdance Festival, there was also the NOW festival, there were live art magazines being produced in Nottingham. We had the Nottingham Trent University with its degree course producing very interesting artists. You had companies like Reckless Sleepers who were very prominent in the region. And you had an interesting bunch of personalities who were all after the same thing. So there was kind of the right constellation at play - in place. So it just sort of made it right really - to continue that and push that further.

(Greenfield, 2011: 199  
Interview with author. See appendix 1)

According to Robert Ayers, artist, writer and “one of the instigators” of the NOW festival that Greenfield cites above, the NOW festival “became one of

Europe’s best respected programs of live art, new theater, performance, music, dance, and technology” (Ayers, no date). Preceding the NOW festival, and also based in Nottingham, was the activities of the Midland Group of whom Nottingham Contemporary website states:

The Midland Group was the most significant organisation involved in the presentation of new art in Nottingham and the East Midlands from its founding in 1943 to its closure in 1987. Its exhibitions and activities created new audiences for contemporary art; raised significant debates concerning education, representation, and new art forms; established networks with peer organisations within the country, and connected to and fostered new currents of international art within the region and beyond  
(Nottingham Contemporary, no date)

Of those activities it is notable that the highly influential National Review of Live Art, which ran for thirty years until 2010, had its origins in “a one-day event called simply the Performance Platform, which was organised by Steve Rogers at Nottingham's Midland Group Arts Centre in 1979” (University of Bristol, no date, a: unpaginated). The performance platform ran again the following year, then grew into an annual festival of live art that encompassed “performances, installations, video screenings, talks and debates” over four or five days – and held at the Midland Group, Nottingham until 1987 (University of Bristol, no date, a: unpaginated). All this suggests that Nottingham, in the years leading up to, and in the early days of, Dance4’s existence, was pivotal in the development of the live art scene in the UK and had an audience for experimental theatre and performance. It provided perhaps a viable set of conditions for risk-taking in dance programming, or as noted in the preceding quote from Greenfield on page 23: “a right constellation.”

Greenfield programmed Nottdance Festival until 2004, with the programming of artists from beyond UK shores beginning in 1997. The presence of international artists in the festival became more prominent from 1999 when

European conceptual dance was introduced and a distinct experimental tone to the programming became evident. Greenfield continued to programme regional and national UK artists although, explaining the increasing programming of European work she recalls “my memory is that if you were true to Nottedance, and the spirit of Nottedance and the aesthetic we were after – there was a very small amount of British work that fulfilled that” (Greenfield, 2011: 202.

Interview with author. See appendix 1). Exceptions highlighted by Greenfield included “people like Jonathon [Burrows] and people like Rosemary [Butcher]. And some other artists who were experimenting with text and performance like Wendy Houston” (Greenfield, 2011: 202. Interview with author. See appendix 1).

Artists programmed by Greenfield in Nottedance Festival from 1999 include:

1999

Simone Kenyon (UK), Paula Hampson (UK), Fiona Wright & Julie Hood (UK), Bock & Vincenzi (UK), Jérôme Bel (FR), La Ribot (UK/ES), Jonathan Burrows Group (UK), Gary Carter & Rosemary Lee (NL/UK), Hush Hush Hush (BE), Kim Itoh & The Glorious Future (JP), Motionhouse Dance Theatre (UK)

2000

Rosemary Butcher (UK), Fin Walker (UK), Jérôme Bel (FR), Akram Khan (UK), Wendy Houston (UK), Saburo Teshigawara (JP) Imlata (UK/IN), Guandong Modern Dance Company (CN), Ricochet (UK), Boris Charamatz & Dimitri Chamblas (FR)

2001

Déjà Donné (CZ/IT), Felix Ruckert (DE), Nigel Charnock (UK), Akram Kahn (UK), Yolande Snaith (UK), Jasmin Verdamin (UK), Jérôme Bel (FR), Sean Tuan John &

Bert Van Gorp (UK/BE), La Ribot (UK/ES), Willi Dorner (AT), Philipp Gehmacher (UK/AT), Black Umfolosi (ZW)

2002

Rosemary Butcher (UK), Jonathan Burrows & Jan Ritsma (UK/NL), Déjà Donn  (CZ/IT), Russel Maliphant (UK), Akram Kahn (UK), Willi Dorner (AT), Felix Ruckert (DE), Protein Dance (UK), Yolande Snaith (UK), Thomas Lehmen (DE)

2003

Nigel Charnock (UK), New Art Club (UK), Anthony Goldsworthy & Thomas Reidelsheimer (UK/DE), Miguel Pereira (PT), Protein Dance (UK), La Ribot (UK/ES), Zero Visibility (NO), Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion (UK), Bock & Vincenzi (UK)

2004

J r me Bel (FR), Lit  Walkey (DE), Catherine Long (UK), Rosalind Crisp (AU), h2dance (UK), New Art Club (UK), Willi Dorner (AT), Lawrence Goldhuber (US), D j  Donn  (CZ/I), Sophia Clyst (UK), Xavier Le Roy (FR/DE)<sup>14</sup>

By 2004 the British Council declared Nottdance to be “a potent mix of work crossing boundaries between dance, performance, live art and visual art” (quoted in Sweeney, 2004: unpaginated) and Greenfield could reflect: “what I didn’t expect or know when we started out was that the work we presented would become the type that was shaping the performance scene in Europe” (Greenfield, quoted in Sweeney, 2004: unpaginated). The kind of work that was shaping the performance scene in Europe was conceptual dance. The thesis that I develop here, which suggests a genealogical extension in the field of European conceptual dance through a *non-representational poetics*, is elaborated through Greenfield’s programming in Nottdance - as well as through my own practice during the period of the research.

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<sup>14</sup> For list of abbreviations see page iii.

In developing the thesis and having firstly trawled through the various resources identified at the beginning of this section – the excel spreadsheet ‘Nottedance Archive’, past Nottedance programmes, Dance4’s video library – resources that related to Greenfield’s period and beyond, and drawing on my existing knowledge of the artists and their works as well as my wider reading, I gradually came to the selection of the three written texts the analysis of which contribute to the development of a *non-representational poetics*. These are the written score for the performance *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen (2002a); *The General Rules Score* for the performance work *Project* by Xavier Le Roy (2010) and Fiona Templeton’s text for Bock & Vincenzi’s *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* (2004a). Although a regard towards the Nottedance archive has been an important aspect of the research, it is noteworthy that the research is not *about* the archive.

### **Archive, records, processes**

Even though the research is not *about* the archive, the three written texts are arguably archival documents in that each is a record of what *has* happened at Dance4’s Nottedance Festival in past years: each is a text that remains from a past work. Jacques Derrida has noted that the word archive asserts two principles:

This name [archive] apparently coordinates two principles in one: the principle according to nature or history, *there* where things *commence* – physical, historical, ontological principle – but also the principle according to the law, *there* where men and gods *command*, *there* where authority, social order are exercised, *in this place* from which *order* is given – nomological principle.

(Derrida, 1996: 1, italics in original)

Derrida’s principles addresses the archival impulse as one premised on the existence of an original and furthermore that this ‘original’ is granted that status by an ordering exercise of authority. Following Derrida’s critical addressing of

the notion of archive as a static repository functioning as an authorized historical account of a past, much recent arts practice has addressed the archive through an address to performing the archive.<sup>15</sup> While I have sympathy with this approach, my approach to the three texts is different, due to the texts themselves. These texts actively disrupt the notion of archive that Derrida critiques. They are not *reducible* to archival traces or documents of what has passed. They are not identifiable as ‘original’ artefacts or as static records. While they exist as records of past processes, they also enable, in a present time, a direct access to the works since they are the means by which processes are triggered or invited that cause the work(s) to come (again) into being. The texts are features of the larger projects; they are ‘works’ in themselves within the larger work of which each is a part.

These more-than written records differ from each other in that each is a distinct type of written document. Each works with language differently in terms of its address to the reader. Each was written at a different time in the production processes of the larger project of which it is a part. The texts are introduced briefly now: each is addressed more fully in the chapters that follow.

Lehmen’s *Schreibstück* (2002a) is a highly specific spatial-temporal score for performance. Published as part of the book, also named *Schreibstück*, it contains instructions for a performance. It was written in advance of the work

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<sup>15</sup> Examples in choreographic practice include Martin Nachbar’s working with Dore Hoyer’s 1962/64 solo series *Affectos Humanos* in the work *Urheben Aufheben* (2008), Fabián Barba’s re-enactment of nine solos by Mary Wigman created 1930-31 in the work *A Mary Wigman Evening* (2009) and Rosemary Butcher’s working with Allan Kaprow’s *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* in her *Reinvention of 18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (2010). Within scholarship, André Lepecki has introduced the notion of “‘will to archive’ [...] a capacity to identify in a past work still non-exhausted creative fields of “impalpable possibilities”” (Lepecki, 2010: 31). Recent high profile research projects include two AHRC projects: ‘Performing the Archive’ (2008-10), led by dance scholars Rachel Fensham and Alexander Carter, which worked with The Laban Archive to address “the role and significance of archives as repositories with second lives in the present” (University of Surrey: no date) and ‘Performing Documents’ (2010-2013) which questioned how “new generations of artists draw on the marks and traces that earlier works have left behind” (University of Bristol: no date, b).

being performed, and with the intent that Lehmen himself would never create a version of the work (Lehmen, 2002a: unpaginated). The score is for others to carry out. It is a record of Lehmen's intent for the work in its delineation of the structure of the piece; it has become a record of past versions and it is a proposition for future versions.

Le Roy wrote four scores relating to *Project*. Three scores relate to the performance itself. The fourth, *The General Rules Score* (Le Roy, 2010) is a one page written score containing instructions that attests to processes that were undertaken in the development of *Project*. It is this score that is primarily examined in this thesis. *The General Rules Score* contains instructions for entering into processes of negotiation, discussion, inventing and testing with others for the purpose of creating games together to be performed as a choreography. It gives no instructions for actions as such. It is a record of the processes undertaken by Le Roy and his collaborators in developing *Project* and an invitation to others to carry out those processes.

Fiona Templeton's text is part of the book *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* (2004). The text was transcribed from her recorded voice, captured while she spoke as the sole audience member of the live performance of *Invisible Dances: A Show That Will Never Be Shown*. Templeton, seated in a darkened theatre, was tasked with recording, for a future audience, "her experience of watching" (Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a: 7). This text is a record, a recording in real time of Templeton's watching, her trying to make sense and this 'for' a (future) audience; it is a record that I suggest generates in a (future) reader a perceptibility of her own processes of trying to make sense of *Invisible Dances*.

These texts are variously testament to there having been a past event. At the same time the texts do not orientate the reader's engagement towards the

notion of a past 'original' work. Each text 'houses' the creative concerns of its makers, not in a static or arrested manner, but in a manner that continues to bring the work into being. The thesis argues that what is archived (or housed) in these records is processes and the means for further activation of processes. While these texts and the written word are important, it is also worth noting that the research is not *about* language.<sup>16</sup> Rather the research examines the choreographic and performance processes that have given rise to the texts and the processes that the texts engender.

### **Recording and constraining processes**

In researching *non-representational poetics*, something like a recording has been found to operate not only in the three works introduced above, but also in the two works that are submitted as the practical element of the thesis. In the performance installation work in collaboration with Katrina Brown - *what remains and is to come* - a live recording happens on body and on paper as a consequence of specific material processes between body, paper and charcoal being activated. *Perception Frames* is a collection of choreographic scores containing instructions for processes. The written work is (to a large extent) a record of various frames for perception that were developed during the practical research. It is also an invitation for and proposition to others to enter into specific perceptual processes that generate a choreographic event in a present (or future) moment of choreographic practice. In the practices examined and undertaken, the recordings operate in and for a multiplicity of times: the actual past(s) of the various recordings, a present encounter that provokes a processual activation in a present time and the possibility of future activation(s).

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<sup>16</sup> To approach these texts purely as written documents would have produced a different thesis, one that perhaps addressed the material structure of language and its capacity to exceed signifying functions. This has not been the lens through which this research has been orientated.



The recordings that operate in the five works discussed are not captures of fixed 'original' moments of action. They are variously recordings of and for processes: processes that have arisen in the making (or development) stage of the work and/or processes that are engendered in the doing (or performing) stage of the work. In the recording there is a delineation of processes; this delineation is a contour through which further processes can be activated. The processes are 'open' in that outcomes are uncertain; at the same time the processes are in each case differently and specifically constrained. In the activation of these processes a choreographic event comes into being – and always differently.

Each of the works is constructed through processual means with the various records and their 'housing' of processes (as suggested on page 30) being testament to that. In addition, in each case the processes combine specific constraints and an indeterminacy of outcome. This combination, I suggest, contributes to a *non-representational poetics*. However, the thesis argues that a further element is required for a *non-representational poetics*, which is a relational aspect to the processes undertaken. This is elaborated with regard to each of the works in chapters three to seven.

I have suggested that the records that 'remain' - the scores of *Project*, *Schreibstück* and *Perception Frames*, Templeton's transcribed text for *Invisible Dances* and the paper and charcoal prints of *what remains and is to come* - are in themselves aspects of each work. As such they assert the works as belonging within an expanded field of choreography.

### **On choreography and (writing in) an expanded field**

The etymology of choreography implies that choreography is the graphic formulation of the dance actions for the chorus "from Greek *khoreia* dancing in unison (from *choros* 'chorus')" and "method of writing or drawing [...] suggested by Greek *-graphia* 'writing'" (Oxford Dictionary, 2013a). In such an

understanding of choreography, the written or graphic form is intended to preserve the steps and gestures for posterity and for future dancing. Graphic systems of notation, including Labanotation and Benesh notation, function as representations of the (bodily) writing of choreography.<sup>17</sup> Choreography also has a more extended dictionary definition: that of “the art or practice of designing choreographic sequences” (Oxford Dictionary, 2013a). The four written texts that I discuss here disrupt notions of choreography as preservation of existing steps, as unison dancing or sequence design. However they are a form of ‘design’, though what I suggest is designed is a proposition, a possibility, a set of processes. With regard to the fifth work, *what remains and is to come*, while the recordings that remain following a performance are, in a sense quite literally, preservations of bodily actions on paper, these are not recordings for posterity or for future dancing. They are recordings that are consequent on a particular activation of material processes. All five works of this thesis belong with an expanded notion of choreography in which dance is untwined from choreography (Spångberg, 2012) and in which “choreography and dancing are [understood as] two distinct and very different practices” (Forsythe, no date: unpaginated).

The three written scores of this thesis - *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen, *The General Rules Score for Project* by Xavier Le Roy and my work *Perception Frames* - are open scores with indeterminate outcomes.<sup>18</sup> They are (variously) scores for

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<sup>17</sup> For more on Labanotation see Hutchinson Guest (2005). For more on Benesh notation see Royal Academy of Dance (no date).

<sup>18</sup> Other artists working in dance and choreography have presented scores in written form that have indeterminate outcomes. Some examples are Yvonne Rainer’s instructional task based scores in *Work 1961-73* (Rainer, 1974) which contains scores of previously performed works; Deborah Hay’s written score *No time to fly* written after her performance of the work as a score for other’s to use (Hay, 2010); Nancy Stark Smith’s *Underscore*, which is primarily a score for practice - developed through her long years of teaching contact improvisation - available in the book publication *Caught Falling* (Koteen & Stark Smith, 2008); Vida Midgelow’s *Trace: Improvisation in a Box* a collection of improvisational tasks (Midgelow, 2007) and the collection *Everybody’s Scores* containing scores by thirty-one dance artists gathered following an open call “to contribute to the collection of performance scores” (Chauchat, & Ingvarsten, 2010: 6). Beyond the field of dance, Fluxus artists (such as George Brecht, Alison Knowles and Yoko Ono) are well know for their event scores many of which are presented in *the Fluxus Performance*

processes, and for making perceptible processes that, in their activation, produce a choreographic event. In the case of *Perception Frames* the scores delineate processes for working with perception in such a way that there is an active attention in the mutual activity of thought and action arising.

### **Perception and writing choreography**

In the field of western contemporary dance the use of training and compositional methods that work with perception and the perceptibility of perception, is not unusual. It is noted in this thesis in the approach to movement in the work of Bock & Vincenzi (UK), which is discussed in chapter six, and in the work of William Forsythe (US/DE) as discussed in chapter seven (on page 162). Other artists working directly with approaches that highlight perception and the perceptibility of perception include Lisa Nelson (US), Nancy Stark Smith (US), Thomas Hauert (BE/CH), Bebe Miller (US) and Frédéric Gies (FR).<sup>19</sup> The approaches of these choreographers are variously workshop or training practices for the undoing of habits, and methods of choreographing.<sup>20</sup>

French choreographer Frédéric Gies, has created *Dance (Practicable)* (2006) - a written score for performance that works with perceptual processes. Like the performance scores of my work *Perception Frames* and Thomas Lehmen's *Schreibstück* it can be worked with by others, without the intervention of its

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*Workbook* (Freidman, Smith & Sawchyn (eds) 2002) and the more recent and ongoing (from 1995) collaboration between Hans Ulrich Obrist and Independent Curators International, which invites artist to "create an instruction that someone else can use to make an artwork" (Fowle & Wu Giarratano in Obrist, 2013: 9).

<sup>19</sup> While this is by no means an extensive list, it attests to the prevalence of an approach to dance and choreography that is concerned with mindbody unity. A fuller articulation of the numerous practices in dance concerned with mindbody unity that are now part of much western dance practices and trainings, and the historical contexts that have given rise to them is beyond the scope of the present research.

<sup>20</sup> For example Lisa Nelson has developed a practice in which she "redirect[s] the shaping or intention of an action before it appear[s]" (Nelson, 2003: 1); Rosalind Crisp, when she notices her habitual movement, practices "making a conscious decision to redirect my attention" (in Gallasch, 2007: unpaginated); choreographers Thomas Hauert and Bebe Miller work with strategies that generate "a direct encounter with the dancing mind and the thinking body" (Motionbank no date, a).

author. Like *Perception Frames* it works with particular perceptual processes, although in the case of *Dance (Practicable)* these processes are defined with reference to a particular body of knowledge. *Dance (Practicable)* is underpinned by the practice of Body-Mind Centering® as developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, practical knowledge of which is required to be able to work with it. This score is presented in written and graphic form with the graphic element depicting spatial position and pathway. There are similarities to *Perception Frames* in that each highlights a concern with *how* movement arises. Gies states in his general instructions to the score that “the different dance styles [in *Dance (Practicables)*] are not produced by reproducing forms but through the particular way of initiating movement” and to “be aware of the different states of mind that appear within each place of initiation of movement” (Gies, 2006: unpaginated). In *Perception Frames* I state that: “the scores aim to generate body-mind ‘thinking’ in the immediate moment of working with them. This is a mode of thinking that seeks to avoid anticipating or planning in advance” (Irvine, 2014: 9). While a common concern towards processes and perception in the arising of movement exists in the two works, the requirement that *Dance (Practicables)* makes for a specific knowledge base, the spatial specificity and the particular timings of this score, are ways in which it differs from the scores in *Perception Frames*. Gies’s work nevertheless has a particular resonance with the present inquiry, and belongs within the genealogy that I am articulating in this thesis that extends from a critique of representation to *non-representational*, generative modes of composition.

The trajectory of the present research relates to the three works programmed by Dance4 in their Nottdance Festival: *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen, *Project* by Xavier Le Roy and *Invisible Dances* by Bock & Vincenzi and my own practice. In each of the works perceptual experience is implicated in the modes of thinking through which the works are generated. The scores in *Perception Frames*, as has been noted above (page 34) “aim to generate body-mind

‘thinking’” (Irvine, 2014: 9). In my work in collaboration with Katrina Brown, *what remains and is to come*, there is (differently) a particular regard towards how attention is given in the perceptibility of the mutual activity of body and mind awareness. In my examination of the score for *Schreibstück* and the *General Rules Score* for *Project*, I have found that, while they do not *primarily* address perception in the way that *Perception Frames* does, they each have the capacity to evoke at times in the performer a perceptibility of her perception, which encompasses the perceptibility of her thinking processes. The evocation of a perceptual experience, in performer and in reader, is a capacity that I have found to be distinctively present in Fiona Templeton’s text for *Invisible Dances*. The way that perception is linked to modes of thinking in the development and performing of the various works, and how this contributes to a *non-representational poetics* is discussed more fully in chapters three to seven. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to an explanation of the research methods used, beginning with my approach to the three Nottdance works.

### **Methods in approaching the three Nottdance works**

As well as an initial close reading of the three texts, a range of methods has been used to approach the works. Interviews and discussions with artists who have been party to the works have been undertaken including with Fiona Templeton - who wrote the text for *Invisible Dances: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* - and with *Invisible Dances* co-directors Frank Bock and Simon Vincenzi. An interview was also undertaken with Peter Shenton who choreographed a version of Thomas Lehmen’s *Schreibstück* that was performed at Nottdance in 2003. The interview has been used since the research seeks to articulate the *poetics* of the practices. It seeks to articulate the methods and processes of composition used, and the experiences of the choreographers and performers in the works. A further method has been an examination of existing research on the three works. Earlier interviews with Thomas Lehmen by Myriam Van Imschoot and Ludovic Burel in 2005, and with Xavier Le Roy by Dorothea von

Hantelmann in 2003, have been of particular relevance since these often reveal the artistic thinking of the choreographers.

The method of practice as research was used to examine the work of Xavier Le Roy through a re-activation of one of the four *Project* scores. This highlights the privileged perspective that I have as artist-researcher, a perspective that enables a level of proximity to the work being examined that is not accessible via a purely scholarly perspective. In the research workshop 'towards a re-activation of re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' I worked with seventeen participant collaborators with *The General Rules Score for Project* (Le Roy, 2010). The "rules", rather than being instructions for actions, are indicators for a process through which a group might together construct rules for games that aim to be performed in a theatrical context. Collaboration is a necessary feature of the working method, as a consequence of the rules themselves. It is important to state that it is not *Project*'s position in the Nottdance archive that lends it the capacity for re-activation in the way described here. Re-activation although it may appear to be a method, and I initially name it as such, is perhaps more accurately understood as a capacity that inheres in *The General Rules Score*: a capacity that is, as it were, 'in waiting.' The rules are records that to be accessed in a meaningful way - that is in a way that might reveal insights about the processes that are contained therein - *require* a present activation.

### **Method of practice as research**

Within the practice as research approach, and in relation to my own choreographic practice, the method of collaborative dialogue, a working in collaboration with one other artist, has been used. Collaborative dialogue is an initial framing of conditions that might facilitate a quality of non-presupposition in practice. This method is introduced briefly here and elaborated more fully in chapter four. In collaborative dialogue, I work with one other artist. We agree that we may bring our interests and concerns but that we do not bring a

particular theme. We agree to dialogue, to work together and with the materials of our practice(s) and to make something together without knowing in advance what that something might be. It is a method identified by me in the early stages as (perhaps) capable of contributing productively to a *non-representational* impetus, a method that might facilitate the eluding of a foundational approach and so one that concurs with the philosophical trajectory of the research inquiry. Collaborative dialogue was undertaken with choreographer Katrina Brown. This led to the performance installation work *what remains and is to come*, which is presented as a practical component of the thesis.

I also undertook a series of public research workshops that led to the development of the other choreographic work that forms part of this thesis, *Perception Frames*. These workshops were undertaken following open calls for participants. They picked up on an aspect that came forward during the research workshop (introduced in the previous section) ‘towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy’s *Project*’. During that research I had found that particular rules increased the performer’s perceptibility of her occurring perception and provoked an enhanced perceptual awareness to her actions. This served to constrain wilful responses and automatic re-actions and to serve the *non-representational* drive of the thesis: it tended to pull forward a quality of thinking that was not about recognizing. The subsequent research workshops investigated and tested rules and frames for giving attention in perception.

The methods of collaboration used in the research workshop ‘towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy’s *Project*’ and in the collaborative dialogues are particular to this research in that they are not based on participants having individual roles with attached responsibilities. This separation of responsibilities is a common practice in collaboration where people have different areas of responsibility that each fulfils and through which a collaborative work is made.

Both the method of collaborative dialogue and the approach used in the research workshop 'towards a reactivation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' involved a common responsibility shared by all parties, to the creative activity of making: a making in relations. While subtle social dynamics can mean that certain people have greater influence in groups, I suggest that these methods frame approaches to working in ways that limit the operations of individual influence and volition and that forge conditions for producing in relations. How this occurs is elaborated in the chapters that follow.

The method in developing *Perception Frames* was somewhat different. Here I took the role of director. However, since the investigation involved developing situations in which performers worked directly with the experiencing of their own perception as the generator of movement, the autonomy of the performer/participant was a crucial aspect of the investigation. This is discussed more fully in chapter seven. This requirement - that the performer/participant act autonomously in the investigation - indicates a collaborative dimension to the research method.

Collaborative dialogue is a particular approach to collaboration that differs from that used by other artist pairs. By way of comparison I address the working methods of two artist pairs who work collaboratively in the field of performance and (as in collaborative dialogue) without a pre-existing subject matter that they intend to address. These artist pairs are live artists Richard Hancock and Traci Kelly and choreographer and musician Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion.

Richard Hancock and Traci Kelly work under the title hancock & kelly live. For Traci Kelly their collaborative working method was her method of PhD research. Hancock and Kelly worked with a solo response form in which, over a three year period, they created a series of six solo pieces with each individually creating an



own solo in response to the previous solo by the other (Kelly, 2010: 1). Hancock and Kelly developed their method as a form of collaborative dramaturgy in which responsiveness and critical dialogue between them was embedded in the solo response form, and in which “the collaboration is in the dialogue and the interval rather than the devising” (Kelly, 2010: 7). The solo form with response involves an ongoing delineation and exchange of roles as maker and dramaturge; it is through this exchange of roles and the relational exchange that it generates, that the collaboration operates. Theirs is a model of collaboration in which the ongoing and shifting relation between the two is a generative force in the works made. It is an intersubjective process in which there is a mutual and reciprocal relation, an exchange that operates *between* them (Kelly, 2010: 11-12). In contrast, in collaborative dialogue there is a concern to work *in* relation rather than through relational exchange, a concern that would, as I discuss in chapter four, lead to an awareness of artistic producing arising in the event of specific relational processes being activated.

Choreographer Jonathan Burrows has established a long-term collaborative relationship with musician Matteo Fargion. They have created a series of works in which there is no evident suggestion that one is choreographer, the other musician.<sup>21</sup> An approach they utilize is to work with a pre-existing musical structure, such as the piece by Morton Feldman (1926-87) *For John Cage* (1982) in their *Both Sitting Duet* (2002). The movement material for this work was developed from Feldman’s score (Burt, 2006: unpaginated) and by working through the score “bar by bar” (Burrows, in Motionbank, no date, b) so creating a “direct translation” (Fargion, in Motionbank, no date, b). Borrowing structures from other works is a method Burrows and Fargion regularly employ.<sup>22</sup> The

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<sup>21</sup> This series is *Both Sitting Duet*, *The Quiet Dance*, *Speaking Dance*, *Cheap Lecture* and *The Cow Piece*, *Counting To One Hundred* and *One Flute Note* (Burrows, 2014c).

<sup>22</sup> In *Speaking Dance* (2006) they use parts of *St Matthew Passion* by Johan Sebastian Bach (Burrows, 2010a), *Cheap Lecture* (2009) is a translation of *Lecture on Nothing* by John Cage (Burrows, 2010b) and *Cow Piece* (2009) uses the same structure as *Cheap Lecture* (Burrows, J.

external structure provided by the pre-existing scores becomes a reference point giving a foundation on which the choreographic work is built. This is very different from the approach of collaborative dialogues, which seeks to generate conditions that are unfounded and differently invested in processual and emergent possibilities of a *non-representational* approach.<sup>23</sup>

### **Theorizing and modes of writing**

The choreographic inquiry might be understood as being in relations with a philosophical concern with regard to thinking. There is in this an intertwining of choreographic practices and philosophical thinking. A philosophical concern operates *in* the choreographic practice; the choreographic practices enact a philosophical inquiry. In these mutually imbricated perspectives the operation is other-than through a discursive mode. Might it then be possible to argue that choreography is capable of theorizing in practice, of performing acts of theorizing? This question follows Susan Melrose's earlier (rhetorical) question: "If whatever is understood by 'theory' were actually non-identical and not coterminous with the writing which conventionally serves as its vehicle, might it be possible to argue that some expert practitioners *already theorise* in multi-dimensional, multi-schematic and multi-participant modes, rather than in writing-dominant mode?" (Melrose, 2005: unpaginated, emphasis in original). I suggest that the practices presented as part of, and those discussed in, this thesis can be understood as acts of theorizing *in themselves*. The question then is how might such 'acts' be discussed in written language: how might they be theorized in the practice of writing?

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2010c). *Counting to One Hundred* (2011) and *One Flute Note* (2011) continue to work with the "borrowed shape" of Cage's *Lecture on Nothing* (Burrows, 2014b).

<sup>23</sup> This is not to suggest that Burrow and Fargion's work and working method is not non-representational. The meaning of *non-representational* as used in this thesis, which was introduced on pages 4-5, concerns the possibility of thinking without pre-intent. The collaborative approach of Burrow and Fargion with its use of pre-existing structure is not *non-representational* in the way that I use the term.

I have previously introduced my use of the term *poetics* (page 4) as referring to compositional approaches and processes of practice from the perspectives of choreographer and performer. Implicitly then, I am dealing with practitioner knowledge and experience. My intent in this writing is to work with language to articulate *how* choreographic practitioners - in this case myself and those other practitioners whose work I address - 'work'. This involves an articulation of the kinds of thinking that are involved in that working, the ways of structuring processes of making, as well as the experiential aspects of partaking in the practices. This then offers different modes of (written) theorizing from "spectator-specific modes" (Melrose, 2006: 98). It offers writing of and in the practices. The methods of writing used are an attempt to dynamically situate the theorizing acts that are operative in the choreographic practices. They include a range of writing approaches from different distances and proximities (both temporal and spatial) of the research activities as well as approaches that utilize different voices and registers as introduced below.

Writings undertaken during the research activities and presented here include excerpts from the performance lecture that I presented, for a non-academic dance audience, at Nottedance Festival 2013. Also included are excerpts from self-interviews written at different times in the course of the research. The self-interview is a method that was used by Xavier Le Roy during E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S. This project gave rise to the piece *Project* that is addressed in the thesis. Le Roy used the self-interview as a means to investigate and to publicly share questions that came out of his experiences in E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S. The self-interview enabled him to "develop different perspectives on, during, after and about the project" (Le Roy, in Hantelmann, & Le Roy, 2003: unpaginated). I use the self-interview for a similar purpose here where I present it as a document of my thinking before, during and after particular practices, and as a way to think 'about' the practices and experiences. The self-interview form is presented, with questions being posed in the second person and answers composed in the

first person. The self-interviews offer insights and reflections on the *poetics* that are at work in the choreographic making and doing, in the modes and processes of composing and performing.

The interviews undertaken with Templeton, Bock, Vincenzi and Shenton, reveal some of the intent and experiences of the choreographers and performers in *Invisible Dances* and in *Schreibstück* so offering insights into the *poetics* of their workings. Transcribed sections of the interviews are included in this present writing bringing a poly-vocal element onto the page. All interview content - my self-interviews, interviews with the artists as introduced above in this paragraph, and quotes from the interviews undertaken by other researchers (Myriam Van Imschoot and Ludovic Burel's 2005 interview with Thomas Lehmen and Dorothea von Hantelmann's 2003 interview with Xavier Le Roy (introduced on pages 35-36) are positioned on the right side of the pages:

***Why are they positioned there?***

*I want the page to visually indicate a shift – sometimes in voice but also from the 'position' of that voice which comes from within the making - and perhaps also for that shift to be perceptible in the act of reading. That's why the lines are shorter.*

(Irvine, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2014)

Alongside the methods of writing described thus far, a more traditional discursive academic register of writing is used to consider how the choreographic practices contribute to wider theoretical discourses, including in relations with contemporary writers who are concerned with a *non-representational* impetus. These writers – Karen Barad, Isabelle Stengers, Brian Massumi and Erin Manning - are introduced in chapter two.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has identified the methodological concerns of the research and the research methods undertaken. The documents of past works that I examine have been re-framed as more-than archival remains. These and my own two works have in common the use of recording processes as a feature of the works. I have suggested that the constraining attributes through which these various processes operate are aspects of a *non-representational poetics*, a suggestion that is examined more closely in the chapters that follow.

Following an initial contextualization of conceptual dance's concern with issues of representation, the following chapter begins to consider the generative possibilities of *non-representational* thinking in choreographic practices, in preparation for a closer examination of the five works addressed in the thesis, which is undertaken in subsequent chapters.

## Chapter 2

### On what is happening

#### Introduction

This chapter begins by introducing the programming of *Jérôme Bel* (1995) by Jérôme Bel - the first conceptual dance choreographer to be presented at Nottdance Festival in 1999. It then contextualizes the works examined in, and presented as part of, this thesis as a development in the field of conceptual dance. The work *Jérôme Bel*, which has been associated with the critique of representation (Lepecki, 2006: 45), is taken as a departure point from which to begin to theorize the *non-representational* drive of the thesis. I suggest that the generative operations of the works addressed extend genealogically from Bel's critique. Following this initial contextualization, the chapter begins to consider the kinds of thinking and the conditions for thinking that might contribute to a *non-representational poetics* in choreographic practices. In particular it highlights the processual event - the what-is-happening - in each always-different situation of practice.

#### “Thinking dance” at Nottdance

At the time of writing, Jérôme Bel is established as a seminal figure in European conceptual dance and his work is frequently presented in the UK. However, in 1999 when he was first programmed in Nottdance with the work *Jérôme Bel* “the majority of other [UK dance] venues, wouldn't take it, because they felt they wouldn't be able to get an audience for it” (Greenfield, 2011: 200. Interview with author. See appendix 1). Greenfield notes that “for some of the other venues, and for some of my other national dance agency colleagues, they were just too nervous because their audiences were more conventional [...] more traditional - and they didn't have that kind of live art culture going on in their cities” (Greenfield, 2011: 202. Interview with author. See appendix 1).

It was seven years after the performance of *Jérôme Bel* at Nottdance in 1999 that dance writer André Lepecki declared that Bel's work "takes the form of a systematic critique of choreography's participation in the broader project of Western representation" (Lepecki, 2006: 45). For Greenfield, reflecting back to her programming of *Jérôme Bel*, it was more simple: "I had never seen work like it before. I mean, I was ... ahhh.... It's hard to say really" (Greenfield, 2011: 200. Interview with author. See appendix 1). The "right constellation" at Nottingham (introduced on pages 22-27) had enabled Greenfield to take the risk of programming *Jérôme Bel* (1995) and to carry on programming Bel's work, and that of other conceptual choreographers. Greenfield notes that dance [by UK artists at that time] was less invested in "informed theory" than live art which, unlike dance, "always kind of had its roots in the academic" (Greenfield, 2011: 205. Interview with author. See appendix 1). While Greenfield might not have used the language of "informed theory" she was interested in "artists [who] were playing with the form – and [who] were questioning" (Greenfield, 2011: 203. Interview with author. See appendix 1). For her, the work *Jérôme Bel* was "an immensely crafted, choreographic piece that has no dance in it, and yet, there is a beautifully crafted work - very sensitive work, very intelligent clever work, thinking dance" (Greenfield, 2011: 200. Interview with author. See appendix 1).

Significantly, while British dance at that time may, as suggested by Greenfield above, have been to a large extent uninflected by critical discourses, this was not the case with regard to conceptual dance coming out of Europe. In developing *Jérôme Bel*, Bel was "stimulated by reading *Zero Point of Literature* by Roland Barthes [and] wondered about the "zero point of a dance show"" (Bel in Siegmund 2002a: unpaginated). Bel is referring here to Barthes work published in French in 1953 as *Le Degré Zéro de L'écriture* and later in English in 1990 as *Writing Degree Zero*. Barthes had sought to write "an Introduction to what a History of Writing might be" (Barthes, 1990: 5) proposing one that led to

“neutral modes of writing, called [...] ‘the zero degree of writing’ [in which there was an] absence of all signs [and] a writer without Literature” (Barthes, 1990: 5). Reading Barthes stimulated Bel “to isolate 4 elements which make up a dance show [male body, female body, music, and light] in a slightly, I admit, schematic way” (Bel in Siegmund 2002a: unpaginated). Bel makes no claim to transpose Barthes’ theories onto dance, although as dance scholar Una Bauer notes (and discussed in the following section pages 47-51) Bel stages an exposure of signs (Bauer, 2008a: 39) and, as Greenfield notes above, he creates choreography with no dance in it: a choreographer without Dance. In discussion with dance scholar Gerald Siegmund, Bel shows his concern towards discourse in his statement that in the work *Jérôme Bel* “the body [is used] as a critical tool, and thus as a discursive agent”, and later in discussion with Una Bauer, “my artistic project has always been to produce discourses” (Bauer, 2008b: 46). Bel’s interest in dance’s capacity to contribute to cultural discourse reflects what Greenfield noted above (page 45) as UK live art’s investment in “informed theory” and accounts perhaps for the live art and visual art audiences (as well as dance audiences) which Greenfield notes attended Bel’s work (Greenfield, 2011: 201. Interview with author. See appendix 1).

Other producers in the UK were interested in this kind of “thinking dance” - which would become known as conceptual dance - although, with the exception of Bush Hartshorn at Yorkshire Dance, these were not dance producers. Greenfield joined forces with Hartshorn as well as Helen Coles and Steve Slater to form a network of producers to support the work. Interestingly Greenfield notes that “when we did [...] tour people like Jérôme and others, we were touring into the live art network, not the dance network” citing venues such as Arnolfini [Bristol] and Tramway [Glasgow] (Greenfield, 2011: 202. Interview with author. See appendix 1) - venues that, as well as being associated with experimental performance are also associated with visual art. Perhaps another aspect of the “right constellation” at Nottingham was Dance4’s access to a



visual art space - the white space of Bonington Gallery - for the programming of works that challenged the conventions of theatre dance. It was at Bonington that *Jérôme Bel* was performed in 1999. Dance4 continues to programme some Nottedance events at Bonington Gallery.

### **The critique of representation as point of departure**

There follows an excerpt from the performance lecture that I presented at Bonington Gallery at Nottedance Festival 2013, in which I discuss *Jérôme Bel*. As noted above, according to Lepecki, Bel's work "takes the form of a systematic critique of choreography's participation in the broader project of Western representation" (Lepecki, 2006: 45). In the performance lecture I draw on I reference performance writer Una Bauer's texts (2008a and 2010) in my discussion of the piece *Jérôme Bel (1995)* by Jérôme Bel. The style and address of the performance lecture, borrows Bel's method of critiquing representation through exposing the processes of theatrical representation while operating within systems of representation.<sup>24</sup> It does this by inviting the audience to imagine the piece actually happening, in this same place where it previously happened, through a verbal description of certain actions. This verbal description is delivered performatively, in that it uses the present tense and utilizes purposeful pauses to encourage the activity of 'imagining' on the part of audience who become (perhaps) self consciously aware of their imagining, and of their participation in a representational operation. The lecture involves my live voice and my recorded voice, the latter of which plays through a local PA system placed beside the table at which I sit.<sup>25</sup> Behind me projected on a screen is the page from the 1999 Nottedance programme that announces the performance of *Jérôme Bel*.

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<sup>24</sup> I do not mean to suggest that the performance lecture had the complexity that occurs in *Jérôme Bel*, but simply to highlight the intent in the performance lecture to make perceptible, in some small way, processes of signification.

<sup>25</sup> The use of live and recorded voice also references Xavier Le Roy's method of performing *Self Interview* (2001) in which he uses his pre-recorded and live voice.

A voice emanates from the PA.

I sit silently and listen.



**Image 1:** Performance lecture *Legacies Genealogies and Possible Futures* at Bonington Gallery, Nottingham 16<sup>th</sup> March during Nottdance 2013

NOTTDANCE FESTIVAL 1999, HERE AT BONINGTON GALLERY, FRENCH  
CHOREOGRAPHER JÉRÔME BEL PERFORMED THE PIECE *JÉRÔME BEL*.

[...]

DANCE SCHOLAR, UNA BAUER TELLS US THAT BEL WAS INTERESTED IN  
SHOWING HOW ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE OPERATE AS SIGNS TO CONVEY  
PARTICULAR MEANINGS. IN THE PIECE *JÉRÔME BEL*, BEL ISOLATED FOUR  
ELEMENTS OF A DANCE SHOW: LIGHT, MUSIC, FEMALE BODY, MALE BODY...

*[pause]*

THERE IS AN EMPTY, WHITE SPACE...

*[pause]*

FOUR NAKED PERFORMERS ENTER...

*[pause]*

ONE PERFORMER HOLDS A NAKED LAMP TO LIGHT THE SHOW...

*[pause]*

SHE WRITES THOMAS EDISON ON THE WALL...

*[pause]*

ANOTHER PERFORMER WRITES IGOR STRAVINSKY ON THE WALL...

*[pause]*

THEN BEGINS TO HUM STRAVINSKY'S RITE OF SPRING...

*[pause]*

BEL IS PLAYING WITH THE ABILITY OF THE SPECTATOR TO UNDERSTAND THIS GAME, TO INSTANTLY RECOGNIZE; TO READ THE BODY AND THE NAME AS SIGNS FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO CREATED THE LIGHT AND THE MUSIC. TO RECOGNIZE THE PERFORMERS AS REPRESENTATIVE OF SOMETHING ... SOMEONE ... ELSE ...

*[pause]*

ANOTHER PERFORMER, THE NAKED FEMALE WRITES HER OWN NAME...

*[pause]*

THE NAKED MALE WRITES HIS OWN NAME...

*[pause]*

THESE NAMES DO NOT INVITE 'RECOGNITION' IN THE WAY THAT THE SPECTATOR HAS 'RECOGNIZED' THE PREVIOUS NAMES. THESE NAMES DO NOT BELONG IN A PAST, IN A WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN... AND SO BEGINS BEL'S EXPOSURE OF HOW SIGNS OPERATE<sup>26</sup>

(Irvine, R. 2013b)

For Bauer these names, that of the performers Claire Haenni and Frédéric Seguetto, "are only representative of their own bodies, and their own bodies

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<sup>26</sup> This draws on Bauer (2008a: 36-37).

are only representative of them. They don't stand for anything in terms of Western cultural history" (Bauer, 2008a: 36). Their names, along with a multitude of details to do with each person including "bank account balance, height, weight, date of birth and phone number" (Bauer, 2008a: 36) achieve a "paradoxical case of exposure that actually doesn't expose anything other than exposure itself" (Bauer, 2008a: 37). Bel is playing "a representational game" in which actions "in their half-failure to represent [...] are exposed as signs" (Bauer, 2008a: 39).<sup>27</sup> Evidently, this "half-failure" occurs because the actions exist within a situation that is presented as representational and in which, according to Bauer, what is exposed is "the *processes* of the production of signification" (Bauer, 2010: 68).

Bauer addresses the self-awareness of the audience to the exposing of the *lack* of signification, suggesting that it generates in the spectator a "movement of thought [such that] the play with representation, the *perception* of representation as a game, is ensured" (Bauer, 2008a: 39, emphasis added). Bauer's foregrounding of the embodied nature of thinking in perceptual experience is resonant with the concerns of this thesis. Bauer's reading introduces the perceptibility of perception alongside the (half) failure of representation, and highlights also the materiality of the spectating body.

Bauer's "movement of thought" (Bauer, 2008a: 39) that is perceptually experienced by the spectator, differs from the concerns of this thesis. This thesis addresses the perspective of performer and choreographer, or rather it addresses the experience of choreographer and performer in her engagement in and with the embodied nature of thinking. Furthermore, rather than doing this to expose processes of representation, the thesis considers how thought

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<sup>27</sup> Bauer's fuller articulation of the specifics of this through "the force of the neutral that opposes its representation, staged together with an attempt at its representation [...] as the true object of the performance" (Bauer, 2008a: 39) and its contribution to spectator studies falls outside the scope of the present research.

might be generated and experienced, by choreographer and performer, through *non-representational* modes.

While Bel asserts his critique of representation, his performers carry out repeated and repeatable actions in the service of that critique. Their roles are those of Bel's representatives within a system that he sets in motion in order to deliver his critique. Bel's critique of representation is a departure point from which the works developed and addressed in this thesis extend. I suggest that these works approach a concern with issues of representation through modes that are other-than representational; each, I suggest, operates (through varying degrees and methods) towards pre-empting an *a priori* engagement with representational structures.

Bel has been identified as a key figure in the development in western dance that emerged in continental Europe in the mid 1990s. In suggesting that the works addressed here 'extend' from Bel's work, I indicate a genealogical linkage to that late 20<sup>th</sup> century development in western dance – a development that has become known as conceptual dance.

### **Conceptual dance and conceptualizing practices**

In 2004, dance writer André Lepecki suggested that the development in western dance practices was sufficiently robust to be termed an "art movement [though one] that does not as yet have a name" (Lepecki, 2004: 171). The term conceptual dance has since become used as an encompassing term for this art movement, although it remains contested as I discuss below. Lepecki, writing in 2004, identified the concerns of this movement as including "a distrust of representation [...] an insistence on the dancer's presence, a deep dialogue with the visual arts and with performance art [and] a politics informed by a critique of visibility" (Lepecki, 2004: 173). In 2006 Ramsay Burt noted historical precedents in the field of dance for the concerns identified by Lepecki in

members of the New York Judson Dance Theatre a generation ago in the 1960s (Burt, 2006: 194). Also in 2006 Lepecki identified in conceptual dance an historical linkage to “twentieth century performance and visual arts” (Lepecki, 2006: 135; footnote 2). From within the broad sweep of “twentieth century performance and visual arts”, which would include Judson, Lepecki points to the conceptual art movement suggesting a usefulness in the term conceptual dance, implying in the shared use of the word ‘conceptual’, a linkage to that movement (Lepecki, 2006: 135; footnote 2). Lepecki notes that the following concerns of the conceptual art movement are also present in conceptual dance:

its insistence on politics, its fusion of the visual with the linguistic, its drive for a dissolution of genres, its critique of authorship, its dispersion of the art work, its privileging of the event, its critique of institutions, and its esthetic emphasis on minimalism.

(Lepecki, 2006: 135; footnote 2)

I agree with Lepecki’s articulation of shared concerns, however the issue here is about the linkage that the shared use of the word ‘conceptual’ infers, particularly because the term conceptual art is associated with visual arts practices. Critical theorist and performance maker Bojana Cvejić, who was introduced on pages 6-8, argued in 2005 against the linkage of the choreographic movement called (or mis-called) conceptual dance with visual art (Fabius, 2012: unpaginated).<sup>28</sup> Dance writer Jeroen Fabius reports that Cvejić suggested that the word “conceptual” has been transplanted onto dance and that it risks “polaris[ing] the dance field, reinforcing opposition between thinking and feeling” (Fabius, 2012: unpaginated). More recently, in 2012, Cvejić suggested, though did not elaborate, that the heterogeneous works identified as conceptual dance are not conceptual but “conceptualizing” (Cvejić, 2012).<sup>29</sup> The notion of “conceptualizing”, if understood in its present participle form, so

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<sup>28</sup> Fabius is here reporting on the conference ‘It takes place when it doesn’t: on dance and performance since 1989’ which was held at Tanzquartier Wien, Vienna, 3-5 March 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Cvejić (2012) made this comment at the end of a rather informal talk prior to the performance of Xavier Le Roy’s *Le Sacre du Printemps* at Mercat de les Flors in Barcelona.

as a verb, is broadly in agreement with this thesis. It allows for the (possible) processual *acts of thinking* in dance and choreography that this research seeks to address. It pulls forward the event of thinking in practice.<sup>30</sup>

Conceptual is defined as “relating to or based on mental concepts” (Oxford Dictionary, 2014a). Concept is defined as “an idea or mental image which corresponds to some distinct entity or class of entity” originating from the “Latin *conceptum* ‘something conceived’” (Oxford Dictionary, 2014b). If we think ‘concept’ there is, suggested by the Oxford Dictionary definition above, a correspondence to an existing entity. This thesis argues that a *non-representational poetics* operates other-than ‘in correspondence to an existing entity.’ Rather it argues that through processual events of *acts of thinking* a different kind of ‘conceiving’ may occur in which mental concepts are not translated onto the body as a mode of choreographing and in which thinking involves a non-separation of mind and body.

If we think ‘conceptualizing’ as activity of mind and body in thinking, as the possibility of modes of thinking that might give rise to “some distinct entity” in the event of thinking - might it be possible to say that the practices do a conceiving, a kind-of conceptualizing in practice, in a particular operating together of thinking and action? Might that ‘conceiving’ be of thought and of choreographic work that is not previously imagined? Might that ‘conceiving’ be an arising, a coming-into-being, that is perceptibly felt? These are the kinds of questions that have found their way into the creative practices of the research,

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<sup>30</sup> More recently Cvejić (2013) has discussed a collection of European choreographic works that were developed during the period addressed in this thesis – works by Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema; Boris Charmatz; Eszter Salamon; Mette Ingvartsen; Xavier Le Roy; Mette Ingvartsen and Jefta van Dinther - arguing that these works give rise to concepts that “*express*” problems through the various choreographers’ critical address to “the prevailing regimes of representation” (Cvejić, 2013: 2, emphasis in original). While there is similarity in Cvejić examination of these works with regard to her “performance *qua* process” (Cvejić, 2013: 2) and my articulation of a processual activation that does a choreographic producing (which is discussed in the self-interview on pages 59-60), Cvejić develops her argument primarily through a philosophical and spectatorial reading while this research seeks to articulate from the perspective of practice itself. This is discussed more fully on pages 6-8.

and in which there is not a separation of thinking and feeling which Cvejić identified (as noted above on page 52) as a risk present in the use of the term conceptual dance.

In spite of the usefulness I find in the way of thinking ‘conceptualizing’, as articulated above, for the works that I now discuss in this thesis, I continue to use the term conceptual dance for the heterogeneous creative and critical movement that emerged in 1990s continental Europe. In so doing I acknowledge conceptual dance as a term that indicates a shift in dance practices as identified by Lepecki (2006: 135) and from which the conceptualizing practices that I discuss genealogically extend: and I acknowledge (pragmatically) the term conceptual dance as one that refuses to go away.<sup>31</sup>

In forming the above questions around ‘conceptualizing’ I write as an artist-researcher concerned with (thinking) activities in choreographic practice. I acknowledge that the writing opens questions that can contribute to philosophical debate about the nature of thinking, of ontogenesis and, in the field of aesthetics and artistic production, questions of politics and the relations between praxis and poesis. I retain here the position of artist-researcher concerned with articulating practices (by which I mean activities undertaken by choreographers and performers) a position from which I attempt a theorizing in writing that keeps the activities of practice in the forefront. I do this rather than bringing a philosophical debate around the issues that the practices raise into that forefront, an activity that may be taken up by the philosophers working in the field of performance philosophy.

The present research in *non-representational poetics* investigates situations of or for practice that might give rise to perceptible *acts of thinking* in practice

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<sup>31</sup> Writers who have used the term conceptual dance more recently include Amelia Jones (Jones, & Heathfield (Eds) 2012: 14), Una Bauer (2010: 29) and Claire Bishop (2009: unpaginated).



itself, *acts of thinking* that function to generate the choreographic work. The conceptualizing intent of the research orientates towards the possibilities of generating choreographic work other-than through a (critical in the case of Bel) representationalist reliance on what is recognized and recognizable. Extending from Bel's critique, the agency of the performer, no longer in the role of the choreographer's representative, is brought into question, as is the performer/choreographer relation. Issues of agency and of relations run through the practical investigations and written commentaries that follow. Also running through, and interwoven with questions of agency and relations, is a consideration of *how* thinking is, or may be, generated in ways that are not founded on representationalist orders of thinking. It is in particular operations of agency, relations and thinking *in* what is happening in occurring choreographic practices that various works of the thesis come-into-being.

### **On *non-representational* and agential-relations**

What is happening in practices is a concern of feminist theorist and science philosopher Karen Barad. Her project develops from her criticality of systems of representation based on Cartesian dualism. She questions the excessive power that is granted to language (distinct from matter) and "the representationalist belief in the power of words to mirror preexisting phenomena" (2003: 802).<sup>32</sup> Exposing the tripartite structure that is implicit in theories of representation Karen Barad states:

In addition to knowledge (i.e., representations), on the one hand, and the known (i.e., that which is purportedly represented), on the other, the existence of a knower (i.e., someone who does the representing) is sometimes made explicit. When this happens it becomes clear that representations serve a mediating function between independently existing entities. This taken-for-granted ontological gap generates questions of the accuracy of

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<sup>32</sup> Barad's position is developed from the critical perspectives of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, which have exposed how political representationalism constitutes the subject that it purports to represent (Barad, 2003: 804).

representations.

(Barad, 2003: 804)

Having articulated an implausibility around the “accuracy of representation” Barad asks, what happens if we no longer assume that the world is populated with “inherent resemblances” (Barad, 2003: 811). Shifting the discourse from “questions of correspondence” that are associated with representation, and resonating with the critical and creative concerns of this thesis, she turns her concerns towards “matters of practices/doings/actions [which brings forward] important questions of ontology, materiality and agency” (Barad, 2003: 802).

Barad elaborates an “agential realist ontology” to account for how it is that *something*, rather than inherently resembling something that already exists, might be understood in terms of being differentiated into being. For Barad:

The primary ontological unit is not independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties but rather *phenomena*. [...] *Phenomena are the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting “agencies”*. [...] The notion of *intra-action* (in contrast to the usual “interaction” which presumes the prior existence of independent entities or *relata*) represents a profound conceptual shift. It is through agential intra-action that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and that particular concepts (that is particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful.

(Barad, 2007: 139)<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Barad draws on the work of Niels Bohr, the philosopher-physicist who won the Nobel Prize for his quantum model of the atom, arguing that for Bohr “things do not have inherently determinate boundaries or properties, and words do not have inherently determinate meanings” (Barad, 2007: 138). According to Barad, Bohr called into question “the inherent distinction between subject and object, and knower and known” posing a “radical challenge [to] Cartesian epistemology and its triadic representationalist structure of words, knowers, things” (Barad, 2007: 138). Barad notes that Bohr did not explore the ontological dimension. She “mined his writing for his implicit ontological views [and] elaborates on them in the development of an agential realist ontology” (Barad, 2007: 138).

Barad's account is performative; it insists on a what-is-happening in relations. It is one that acknowledges the agential capacities of both human and non-human elements. And it articulates a coming-into-being: a boundary forming, a differentiating into some 'thing' that is not previously identified. Her account has offered tools to think (here I am alluding to the section on Isabelle Stengers that follows) about certain choreographic practices *in practice*, particularly in *what remains and is to come*, in which Katrina Brown and I work with paper, body and charcoal. Barad's account highlights that in order to avoid the recreation of representationalist methods, there is the need to be alert to the occurring of boundary making, to moments of differentiating into some 'thing'. This then calls up the need to attend towards thinking-as-part-of the (material) world. Through practices of attending in what is happening, while working with materials, Brown and I became increasingly alert to the generative capacities of materials in relations. This is discussed in chapter four.

I have highlighted here a concern towards a *how* of being in relations, as part of a situation, and through which a coming-into-being might arise in the event of relations – an arising through unfounded means. In the quest towards a *non-representational poetics* that insists on such means, there is an ongoing questioning about the *how* of thinking in or for unfounded possibilities of emergence: about *how*, in (various) choreographic practice, *acts of thinking* might be possible. Science philosopher Isabelle Stengers addresses these concerns.

### **Situations for thinking**

Stengers, who is concerned with the *how* of thinking, proposes “an ecology of practices as a tool for thinking through what is happening” (Stengers, 2005: 185). Her use of the present continuous tense in “what is happening”, calls forth an eventness in which (a present) thinking happens. In so doing it resonates with my concern with thinking as an occurring event (which was introduced on

page 9). Stengers' "ecology of practices" is developed through her concern for what she calls "good science", initially with regard to practices in the physics laboratory. Her "good science" is one that refuses the persistent belief (in physics practices) that the world remains outside waiting to be discovered (Stengers, 2005: 183).

With her "ecology of practices", Stengers orientates her concerns with scientific practices towards cultural practices. She emphasises that no practice is like another; that each is particular and none is independent of its environment (Stengers, 2005: 184). For Stengers "the gesture of taking [the tool for thinking] in hand is not justified by, but is both producing and produced by, the relationship of relevance between the situation and the tool" (2005: 185). Otherwise put, the particular "tool" in its being used in a particular situation is to a large extent defining, or at least contouring, the possible. For Stengers:

what is at stake is 'giving the situation the power to make us think', knowing that this power is always a virtual one, that it has to be actualized. The relevant tools, tools for thinking, are then the ones that address and actualize the power of the situation [...] in other words make us think and not recognise.

(Stengers, 2005: 185)

Stengers' position indicates a need for concern towards how situations are constructed, and towards how these constructions make 'thinking' possible. Orientated towards choreographic practice, it offers a way to approach the development of choreographic processes and choreographic structures that might forge conditions for *non-representational* thinking. This is not to say that it functions as a *means* for their development. Rather it asserts first of all a need for care in constructing situations, a care not to create structures that invite recognizable or familiar patterns of thought and action. This in turn opens questions of the roles and agency of the various parties to a situation for whom 'thinking' should be equally unfounded. And, of course, it asserts the need to

accept uncertainty with regard to potential outcomes.

A concern with constructing situations for thinking and how situations might engender *acts of thinking* has run through this research. It has been particularly relevant to the practice as research element in which as choreographer I have been constructing situations for working with others. Stengers' proposition has helped me to reflect on the method of collaborative dialogue, which was introduced in chapter one (pages 36-37). It has also offered a lens to think about structure, and processes of structuring, in the choreographic works examined. Implicit, in both constructing situations for thinking and in the engendering of thinking in a situation, is process. The works that are addressed in the thesis, works that variously engender thinking in a situation that in turn engenders a producing of the choreographic work, I have come to call *processual constructions*.

### **On *processual constructions* and what's to come**

***Can you say how the term 'processual construction' came about?***

*Construction is connected to Isabelle Stengers' concern with creating situations for thinking and not recognizing.<sup>34</sup> It seems to me that 'how' a situation is constructed is a crucial issue: to not assume, to not adopt the habit of a known structure. This was something that I was thinking about - in for example the collaborative dialogue approach. Collaborative dialogue*

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<sup>34</sup> Stengers is introduced in the previous section starting on page 57. She argues for situations that "make us think and not recognise" (Stengers, 2005: 185).

*was a way to approach making in which the activity of structuring, or perhaps it's more accurate to say con-structing, happens in or through the situation of the dialogue.*

*The research is concerned with producing, with making, in a non-founded way. The collaborative dialogue approach is a method that doesn't work with pre-existing structures. It perhaps operates more as a means to facilitate situations for processes of con-structing. Processes cannot be untangled from this sense of con-structing: con-structing happens in the occurring of processes. So here already in the making, process and constructing are mutually operating.*

*Later I came to understand that the works that I was making, in the event of their 'doing' or being performed, also operated through the activation of specific processes: in the case of 'what remains and is to come' material processes and in 'Perception Frames' what I would come to call perceptual sensing processes – and that these processes were producing, were generating in the moment the coming-into-being of the work. So the doing or performing phase of these works I saw as processual events of con-structing too.*

*I also saw the operations of (specific) processes being embedded through the making and the doing phases in the works that I was looking at from Notteddance archive: Thomas Lehman's 'Schreibstück', Xavier Le Roy's 'Project'*

*and Bock & Vincenzi's 'Invisible Dances.' I gradually came to feel that these works were constructed on an ongoing necessity for an activation, and re-activation, of processes – and that this was an important aspect of their contribution to a 'non-representational poetics'.*

*Which is how I gradually came to the term 'processual constructions.'*

(Irvine, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2013)

*Processual construction* is a term that I apply to each of the works that are addressed in the thesis. What they make possible is perhaps, as suggested earlier in this chapter (on page 53), a conceptualizing in practice, a kind of conceiving in the event of thinking and in the conjoined operations of agency and relations. It is situations for thinking in the constrained operations of agency and relations that are developed in my own work and examined in the works of the other artists.

The particular melding of agency and relations, of agential-relations, is different in each of the works. I consider how these variously limit habituated modes of operating, and do a kind of 'forcing' of thinking, a squeezing-thinking-through the constraint. This functions to make possible a what's to come: a what's to come that is not defined as such. What's to come in (a) what-is-happening is always a particular arising in the processual occurring of thought and action.

### **Occurring thinking and perception**

Quietly operating through the non-founded concerns of the choreographic practices and present in various ways in the processual constructions, is a non-

dualistic orientation of mind and body,<sup>35</sup> an occurring-mind-body-thinking in practice.<sup>36</sup> Here I wish to pull forward two interlinked aspects that are inherent to this: one is the processual nature of such thinking; another is that it is an event, by which I mean that it occurs through time – during which something is happening. An occurring-mind-body-thinking in practice also calls up the question of perception, so orientating these accumulating concerns towards the perceptual processes that are happening in the event of such ‘thinking’. Importantly, in the course of the practical research in the development of *Perception Frames*, I have found that the performer’s heightened awareness in the perceptual activity of thought/action occurring, generates a mode of thinking that, in the manner proposed in this thesis, is *non-representational*. Philosopher, artist and dancer Erin Manning and philosopher and cultural theorist Brian Massumi, in both their independent and collaborative writings, address the issue of the perceptibility of perceptual experience in ways that resonate with my research.

Both Manning and Massumi draw on process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) to identify two aspects of perceptual experience that occur simultaneously. The issue that is of particular interest for this research is that this simultaneity often goes unnoticed. The two aspects are “the experience of the flow of actions [which Whitehead calls] “causal efficacy” and the qualitative, vitality affect aspect [which] he calls “presentational immediacy”” (Massumi, 2008: 7). Manning notes that causal efficacy draws on what one (already) knows - in an experiential sense - such that an action like walking (at least in an everyday situation and in which the walker has normative

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<sup>35</sup> A more extensive exploration of non-dualistic bodymind practices in dance and choreography fall outside the scope of the present research.

<sup>36</sup> Philosopher Alva Noë discusses “enactive perception” arguing that “perceiving is a way of acting [...] it is something we do” (Noë, 2004: 1). Noë’s position shares with this research a concern towards unity of mind and body in perception. He primarily addresses questions of consciousness in the affordance of perceptual experience (Noë, 2004: vii). This differs somewhat from the drive of this research, which addresses the perceptual and processual event of what I am here (on this page) calling ‘an occurring-mind-body-thinking.’



capacities) does not require an attention to the details of the activity; past experience operating in causal efficacy provides the sense of “how things go together” (Manning, 2012: 54-55). Presentational immediacy, concerned with the qualitative dimension of perception, operates at “the perceptual level of complexity and subtlety” (Manning, 2012: 55); it involves the perceptibility of occurring perception at a qualitative or feeling level. Presentational immediacy needs causal efficacy for it to be operative, in the sense of active, in the world and not simply operative as an experiential and private occurrence (Manning, 2012: 55).<sup>37</sup>

In the course of the research, the question of how it is to think/act in the perceptibility of perception, in the immediacy of perceptual experience, has arisen as an aspect of the creative inquiry. The two (simultaneous) aspects of perceptual experience as discussed above help me to formulate certain pertinent questions: how can presentational immediacy be brought forward in thinking/acting such that the qualitative immediate dimension of experiencing perception occurring might be experienced? How might causal efficacy, and the relation with past experience that it (by necessity) operates through, support rather than hinder the experiencing of presentational immediacy? What kinds of constraints on ‘occurring-mind-body-thinking’ make this possible?

These questions variously address the perceptibility of perception, experienced in/as an *act of thinking*. A consideration of how performers’ perceptibility of perception may be composed, and how this may contribute to a *non-representational poetics*, is considered in two works of this thesis: *Invisible*

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<sup>37</sup> According to Manning, presentational immediacy “by itself [...] *does nothing*” (Manning, 2012: 55, italics in original). Without casual efficacy, presentational immediacy is a state in which “perception is ensconced in the perception of perception” (Manning, 2012: 55). Oliver Sack’s post-encephalitic patients, who experienced a loss of causal efficacy, became at times, as a consequence of this loss, “frozen”; unable to draw on the pastness of experience they experienced an inability to move (Manning, 2012: 49-58).

*Dances* by Bock and Vincenzi and my work *Perception Frames*. In these works performers are variously immersed in processes of sensing and perceiving in which perceptual immediacy is foregrounded. In *Invisible Dances*, discussed in chapter six, I consider how the different performer's immersions in perceptual sensing are embedded in the work through time, and in such a way that each new party to the work is constrained in her thinking/action in part by earlier processes of other performers' immersion. The scores in *Perception Frames*, discussed in chapter seven, offer situations in which practitioners' occurring-mind-body-thinking is constrained by the processual and perceptual instructions. In the activation of a score, the foregrounding of presentational immediacy functions *for* the choreographic event's unfolding. In each of these works, there is a delineation of constraints that pulls forward the performer's awareness in the immediacy of perceptual experiencing. This contouring of perception is, I suggest, the means by which situations for thinking, in Stengers' sense (Stengers 2005: 185), are constructed in these works.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have positioned a genealogical extension in the field of conceptual dance that extends from Jérôme Bel's critique of representation to modes of practice that operate through processual means - through modes of thinking *in* what is happening - to generate the work. It has been identified that this shift implicates issues of relations and agency.

Theoretical concerns of others that are resonant with the concerns of this choreographic inquiry, in particular with regard to agency, unfounded thinking and how 'something' comes into being, have been introduced. These include Isabelle Stengers' (2005: 185) concern with creating situations in practice that enable thinking and not recognising (discussed on pages 57-59) and Karen Barad's (2007: 139) "notion of *intra-action*" that accounts for how boundaries are formed and how something, rather than inherently resembling something

that already exists, becomes differentiated into being (discussed on pages 55-57). Erin Manning and Brian Massumi's discussions of "presentational immediacy", the qualitative dimension of perceptual experience (Massumi, B. 2008: 7), and "causal efficacy", the pastness of experience that is drawn on in present action (Manning, 2012: 54-55), have also been introduced (discussed on pages 61-64). I have positioned these as helpful in formulating and articulating how it is to think/act in the immediacy of the perceptibility of perception.

The choreographic works addressed in the remainder of this thesis work with relations, agency and (various) activities of thinking in the making and doing of choreography. It is in the conjoined operations of agency and relations - in the processual activation of specific agential-relations - that particular modes of *non-representational* thinking arise and, in so doing, produce the work. How this operates in each of the five works is elaborated in the five chapters that follow, beginning with *Schreibstück* by the German choreographer Thomas Lehmen.

## Chapter 3

### Exposing structural processes in Thomas Lehmen's *Schreibstück*

#### Introduction

This chapter examines the written score for *Schreibstück* (2002a) by the German choreographer Thomas Lehmen, which was performed at Nottdance Festival in 2003. It addresses the instructions for the production of the work and the score itself to consider how *Schreibstück*'s structural operations contribute to a *non-representational poetics*. My suggestion is that the structure does not work *with* representation as Jérôme Bel's *Jérôme Bel* discussed in chapter two (pages 47-51) does: that while *Schreibstück* 'troubles' representation it does so other-than through a critique of representation. I posit that the choreographers and performers who work with *Schreibstück* are, unlike the performers in Bel's *Jérôme Bel*, not representatives in the role of delivering the choreographer's critique. Rather they are agential in a system that is other-than representational. While Bel exposes systems of representation in order to critique representation, Lehmen, I suggest, offers a set of instructions that in their being carried out expose the operations of a self-producing system that operates through the agency of those who partake in it. I consider the way relations and agency operate in Lehmen's system to bring forward diverse modes of thinking and possibilities for *non-representational* modes of choreographic practice.

#### The written work

*Schreibstück* is the title of a book that contains texts by Lehmen, by dance writer Gerald Siegmund and by writer and dance artist Mårten Spångberg as well as instructions for the production, and the score for the performance, of *Schreibstück*. Lehmen wrote the score in advance of any performance of the work being presented. He is the author of a work that others can choreograph.

A key aspect of the work is that it involves three versions of the score, by three different choreographers, being performed in each performance event. A version may be initiated by a producer, a choreographer, a dancer or by Lehmen himself. Lehmen asserts that, although he may initiate a show, he will not create a version, so that it does not influence other versions (Lehmen, 2002a: unpaginated); there is no indication of there being an original version that a rendition of the score might seek to emulate. The book contains detailed instructions for the production processes, for choreographers as well as for space and technical requirements. The instructions for staging include that there be bright lights throughout the piece and no sound other than the occurring noise in the carrying out of the activities. There is a stripped-backness to this staging suggesting, perhaps, that what is happening is to be fully witnessed.

The written score for *Schreibstück* gives highly specific spatial-temporal instructions for the choreography. Each choreographer works with three performers to develop a particular version of the score. Written and graphic elements depict the spatial-temporal organization for a performance. There are twenty-nine “themes” with corresponding instructions for “actions.” The “themes” are organized into thirty-nine sequential one-minute events, which are organized into three sections A, B and C. The following two images show the overall structure of the score - with its organization of the twenty-nine themes into three sections – and one example of a “theme.”

Section-Numbers	Action Dancer	Action Dancer	Action Dancer	Text possible Announcement possible	Text	Markingpoints/ Time Axis
A1	Enter Stage					R1
A2	Disco					
A3	Explaining the Piece	Marking the Themes/ Nothing	Marking the Themes			
A4	Fucking	Fucking + I want	Fucking			
A5	Explaining the Piece	Marking/Nothing	Marking the Themes			
A6	Summary					
A7	Working					
A8	I exist	Nothing	Nothing			
A9	Going into the Future	Nothing	Nothing			
A10	Dying					
A11	Thinking	Nothing	Nothing			
A12	Waiting + Watching					
A13	Waiting + Watching					
B1	Long Pause					R2
B2	Disco					
B3	Basic Human Functions					
B4	Fucking					
B5	Identity Intensities					
B6	Thinking	Nothing	Nothing			
B7	Working	Working + I do	Working			
B8	Personal Philosophy	Nothing	Nothing			
B9	Three Feelings					
B10	Dying					
B11	Intensities of Images					
B12	Waiting + Watching					
B13	Waiting + Watching					
C1	Long Pause					R3
C2	Disco					
C3	Common Choreography					
C4	Fucking					
C5	Common Choreography					
C6	Common Choreography					
C7	Working					
C8	Of Further Importance	Nothing	Nothing			
C9	Thinking	Nothing	Nothing			
C10	Dying	Dying + I believe	Dying			
C11	Summary					
C12	Long Pause					
C13	Waiting + Watching					
	Waiting + Watching					R4
	Exit					

Image 2: The structural score for *Schreibstück*

▶▶ [3] Disco

**Action**

▶▶ Each of the three dancers performs individually disco dances that differ stylistically and personally.

**Indications**

▶▶ Within one minute, each person should perform several different dances, ending and starting the theme at the same time, as usual, but starting and ending the different dances individually within the minute. ▶▶ At every transition from one small dance to the next, change of direction while continuing to dance ▶▶ The dancers' gaze should be directed outward; 360 degrees facing is possible. ▶▶ In each of the three realizations of this idea, timing and succession of the dances may vary, but the specific elements should be clearly recognizable through the exact definition of the movements and the situation. ▶▶ The dances will appear once in every section in the same time unit, thus being performed simultaneously with the other groups. ▶▶ The dancers should perform these movements as soloists with sufficient spatial distance from one another without reacting to each other.


**Time**

▶▶ each time one minute

**Sound**

▶▶ no sound

**Space**

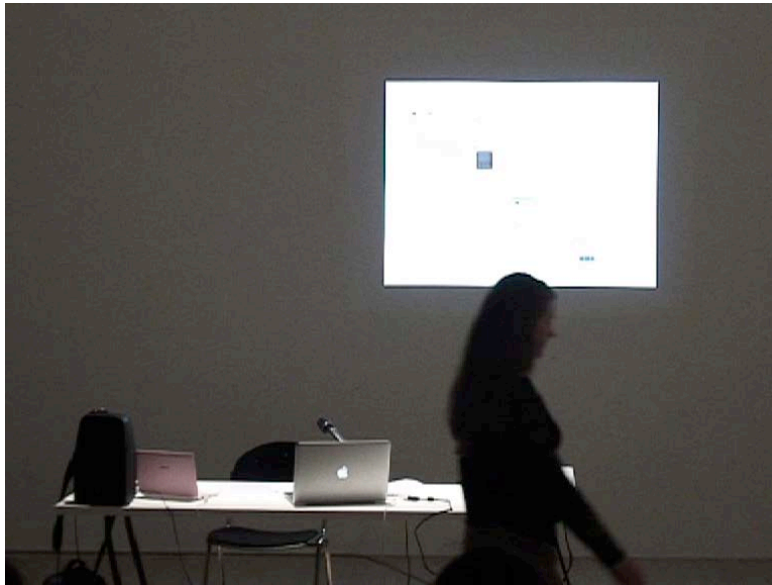
▶▶  space where the group is, in front of the respective section of the temporal axis, but without touching the limits of the other areas downstage ▶▶ The dancers stay at their positions during each one-minute part. They may vary slightly from section to section.

happens in Section No. A1 A2 A3 A4 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 A10 A11 A12 A13 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11 B12 B13 C1 C2 C3 C4 C5 C6 C7 C8 C9 C10 C11 C12 C13

**Image 3:** The theme 'Disco' from *Schreibstück*

In performance, the groups proceed from left to right across the stage. There is a pre-determined, temporal progression through the score, a short time delay between each version, a form of canon that operates in step with the spatial progression across the space. In the performance lecture that I presented at Bonington Gallery, which I introduced in chapter one (pages 47-49), and in which I discussed Jérôme Bel's *Jérôme Bel (1995)*, I also discussed *Schreibstück*.

I am in that same space, Bonington Gallery, where *Schreibstück* was performed. Behind me projected on a screen is the page from the 2003 Nottdance programme that announces the performance of *Schreibstück*:



**Image 4:** Performance lecture *Legacies Genealogies and Possible Futures* at Bonington Gallery, Nottingham 16<sup>th</sup> March during Nottedance 2013

I walk across the space demonstrating the systematic method of composition as my recorded voice emanates from the PA:

GROUP ONE ENTERS AND PERFORMS SECTION A

*[rise from seated position at table, walk forward and stand in 1<sup>st</sup> third of space]*

WHEN GROUP ONE HAS COMPLETED SECTION A

GROUP TWO ENTERS AND BEGINS SECTION A

AND GROUP ONE MOVES ACROSS THE PERFORMANCE AREA TO BEGIN

SECTION B

*[walk across and stand in 2nd third of space]*

WHEN GROUP TWO HAS COMPLETED SECTION A

GROUP THREE ENTERS AND BEGINS SECTION A

GROUP TWO MOVES ACROSS THE PERFORMANCE AREA TO BEGIN SECTION B

AND GROUP ONE MOVES ACROSS THE PERFORMANCE AREA TO BEGIN

SECTION C



*[walk across and stand in 3rd third of space]*

WHEN GROUP THREE HAS COMPLETED SECTION A

GROUP THREE MOVES ACROSS THE PERFORMANCE AREA TO BEGIN

SECTION B

GROUP TWO MOVES ACROSS THE PERFORMANCE AREA TO BEGIN SECTION C

AND GROUP ONE LEAVES THE SPACE

*[walk across until you reach edge of space]*

WHEN GROUP THREE HAS COMPLETED SECTION B

GROUP THREE MOVES ACROSS THE PERFORMANCE AREA TO BEGIN

SECTION C

AND GROUP TWO LEAVES THE SPACE

WHEN GROUP THREE HAS COMPLETED SECTION C

GROUP THREE LEAVES THE SPACE

*[return to seated position at table]*

(Irvine, 2013b)

I encounter the work through my reading of *Schreibstück*. In this reading, I find myself with a sense of a past, present and future operating: a past, present and future that is operating in the three not-quite simultaneous versions, and also in my awareness that versions have already been performed and that other version may yet be performed. I sense an ongoing possibility of multiple versions in the performance of the same: an always-possible and different future. Lehmen asserts that the book is also a score for the reader's "imagined version" (Lehmen, 2002a: unpaginated). For this reader the imagined version is experienced abstractly. It is not an imagining of a distinct version. It is not an imagining of actual actions. It is an imagining of the operations of the structure.

### Systematic structure and agency

Franz Anton Cramer's writing following the premier performance of *Schreibstück* in Berlin suggests that it is the score itself that gives "orientation" for the work (Cramer, 2002a: unpaginated). Cramer aligns the score to the field of open work. He states that "'open-art-work' is an aesthetic form that never reaches a conclusion but always exists as the process of its making" and claims that rarely has the idea of the "'open-art-work'" been "so systematically implemented" (Cramer, 2002a: unpaginated). It is, I suggest, through the systematic scoring of *Schreibstück* that a break from a representational system is achieved.

In chapter two (page 51) I noted that the performers in *Jérôme Bel* (1995) act as representatives for Bel's critique of representation: their actions, choreographed by Bel, expose the processes of signification. In *Schreibstück* the performers enact a level of autonomy that is not available to Bel's performers. In this work each group's independent version operates as a component of Lehmen's systematic structure in which "the creation of meaning of the performance seems to be replaced by the construction of a system" (Bauer, 2010: 127). Una Bauer draws on Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's term autopoiesis in suggesting that *Schreibstück* is a system that functions to reproduce itself through self-referral (Bauer, 2010: 127).<sup>38</sup> It is a system that, although conceived and initiated by Lehmen, "doesn't need Lehmen to (re)produce itself" (Bauer, 2010: 128). It (re)produces through the activities of the various parties to that system: the producers who select the choreographers and combinations of choreographers, and the choreographers and performers who create the independent versions of the score.

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<sup>38</sup> Maturana and Varela are Chilean biologists for whom the term autopoiesis describes the functioning of biological systems. Drawing on Maturana and Varela (1991) Bauer states that "the cell produces its own components, which, in turn, maintain the structure which produces them (the cell). Thus a cell is a product of its own production" (Bauer, 2010: 128).

An extension of the critique of representation that *Schreibstück* achieves is a shift in perspective of audience away from signification (including its failures) towards the processes of the structural operations of the work. I'd like to shift the perspective here from the spectatorial position of Cramer and Bauer, who respectively speak of the score giving "orientation" for the work (Cramer, 2002a: unpaginated) and replacing the "creation of meaning [with] the construction of a system" (Bauer 2010: 127), as noted above, to a consideration of the processes that are happening in the event of *Schreibstück's* (re)producing, and of the agencies through which those processes operate.

The systematic and open structure of *Schreibstück* affords agency to the choreographers and performers, and also to the producers and other parties who select those choreographers. Producers make their choices not knowing what the choreographers will do or how the three versions will work together. For the version at Nottedance 2003, Dance4 commissioned Peter Shenton (UK) as choreographer (who selected his performers independently)<sup>39</sup> and worked with Simon Dove at Springdance Utrecht who commissioned Klaus Jürgens (NL) (Shenton, 2014: unpaginated). The third version at Nottedance by Mart Kangro (EE) had been one of the versions in the premiere performance of *Schreibstück* (2002b) at the Tanz im August 2002 festival in Berlin, when it was performed alongside versions by Martin Nachbar (DE) and Sónia Baptista (PT) – and we might suppose contributed to a quite different performance.

The individual choreographer/performer groups work independently deciding 'how' to implement the score to create their particular version. There is no original, no sanctioned interpretation of the score that can be a measure for a notion of authenticity of any future rendition. The amalgamation of the producers' and choreographers' decisions function for the (re)producing of the system presented as a particular performance. Within this the three

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<sup>39</sup> Shenton worked with Guy Dartnell and James Flynn.

independent versions occupy a delineated position – that of three distinct components.

It has been noted (on page 73) that *Schreibstück* achieves a shift in perspective of audience away from signification and so from representational modes of engagement in terms of spectating. I now consider the extent to which the processes of developing and performing the work might offer the possibility of a shift in the perspective of the agents of the work towards *non-representational* modes of thinking.

### **Thinking and producing in the structural processes of *Schreibstück***

The various agents are required to ‘think’ in as much as they make decisions to carry out actions for the structure. Each ‘thinks’ in the context of her particular role. Each knows that there is no ‘right’ or ‘truthful’ rendition that could be delivered. All of the agents are aware of the operations of the structure and that their individual decisions, when combined in performance, will produce in ways that they cannot control or know in advance. They cannot therefore presuppose the outcome of a particular performance.

That producers, choreographers and performers cannot presuppose the total outcome of their various decisions does not mean that they are thinking without presupposition. A producer’s selection of a particular choreographer because he is ‘funny’ and so will produce something ‘funny’ is a plausible example. The structure certainly allows for this.

In developing their independent versions, each choreographer/performer group makes decisions in their interpretation of the “themes.” Three of these “themes” are “working”, “fucking” and “dying”:

Theme [9] Fucking  
Action: movements related to fucking

[...]  
 Theme [13] Working  
 Action: movements related to working  
 [...]  
 Theme [16] Dying  
 Action: movements related to dying  
 (Lehmen, 2002a: unpaginated, formatting added)

Clearly, these “Action[s]” which function as instructions, invite a representational engagement by the performers. Una Bauer, in her analysis of the premiere performance in Berlin in 2002 has noted that “for the theme ‘Work’ all three dancers perform actions which are representing some sort of actions: one seems to be drilling asphalt; another one rolling something (perhaps making dough or working on a weaving machine); the third one looks as if she is sewing” (Bauer, 2010: 125).<sup>40</sup> These kinds of “themes” in *Schreibstück* invite performers to represent. For the performer carrying out the kinds of actions that Bauer reports, there is an evident representational engagement in her thinking, and one that arises in her following of the score. These “themes” in themselves do not call for *non-representational* thinking.

However, as noted on page 73, in a performance of *Schreibstück* the structural operations of the work come to the fore. The three groups’ (different) compositional decisions are presented – and exposed - as actions alongside other (different) actions of the ‘same.’ This is likely to produce a self-reflexivity in performers, in which they act in the knowledge that differences between versions become evident rather than signifying functions of their individual actions. Performers’ representational actions, carried out in fulfilment of the score, function neither as failures of representation nor as critiques of representation. Here representational engagement functions in a system that is not representational. And the performer (in a self-reflexive sense) knows this. This potentially makes possible a quality of feeling in which a sense of (the

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<sup>40</sup> These observations by Una Bauer refer to the first section of the piece when only one group is as yet one stage.

importance of) selfhood is disavailed since individual expression is not, as it were, the point.<sup>41</sup> For Bauer “individuality or personhood is simply not an essential element of the dance performance *Schreibstück*, it is subdued” (Bauer, 2010: 133).

The issue for this thesis is that the system none-the-less works with ‘individual’ component parts in the (re)production of itself including the ‘individual’ choreographer/performer groups who make their personal and volitional decisions for the choreography. Issues of the lack of volitional decisions in choreographic making practices that arise when agency is combined with relations are addressed in future chapters of this thesis. What is important here is the articulation of a mode of thinking that is representational and knows itself to be (unsuccessfully) so.

Other “themes” in *Schreibstück* perhaps generate different kinds of thinking by the performer:

Theme [17] Thinking

Action: Each dancer performs a sequence of movements which is performed and fixed only in is or her mind, without enacting the movements spatially.

(Lehmen, 2002a: unpaginated, formatting added)

I suggest that this theme invites a quality of engagement that approaches *non-representational* thinking in that it demands a kind of actuality of thinking in the moment. Even though the sequence is (most likely) planned in advance, in order to perform it in “her mind” the performer must give all her present attention to

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<sup>41</sup> A different take on self-reflexivity is suggested by dance scholar Gerald Siegmund, who discusses the piece in relation to issues of subjectivity. Siegmund suggests that “for Lehmen the individual results from the possibility of choice” and that it is through resistance to structures that are alien to the person that subjectivity emerges. Siegmund proposes that when performers each carry out the task-based “themes” in her/his own particular way, they are asserting their subjectivity. He also argues that the piece generates a play of repetition and difference – appearing as a self-reflective mode of presentation (Siegmund, 2002: unpaginated).

the activity of ‘thinking’ that sequence. I make this observation as a performer thinking-into this instruction, sensing what it entails. Lehmen’s instruction for the “action”, as quoted above, constrains the performer’s way of being in the activity. If, for example, the instruction was to perform an action (or a posture) related to thinking, then a representational engagement would be invited – or even required. Rather than this, Lehmen’s instructions pulls towards a mode of thinking that immerses in a present giving of attention in a perceptual mode of engagement.

In *Schreibstück* different modes of thinking are generated in performers some of which, as a consequence of the quality of attention required as in the “thinking” task above, orientate in a *non-representational* mode. Questions of attending in the present moment of what is happening and how this can contribute to a *non-representational poetics*, continues to be addressed in this thesis. In *Schreibstück* this quality of attention is present in a small way, as an aspect of the producing that occurs in the performance moment.

### **Compositional structure, responsibility and autonomy**

The above discussion highlights the agency that is afforded to the individual choreographers. Their decisions are not vetted and are not required to meet with the approval of an external-to-the-component party. While choreographers develop and perform their own interpretations of the score, the compositional structure makes very particular demands. I agree with dance scholar Petra Sabisch’s observation that the objectives of *Schreibstück* are “to demystify the rules that govern artistic production and to create a transparency [which is revealed] within the actual interpretations of the canon-like structure” (Sabisch, 2005: unpaginated). Choreographers have a responsibility to be ‘obedient’ to the structure, and so allow its “transparency”, and at the same time have a responsibility to operate autonomously within it.

In Lehmen's 2005 interview with writer and performance artist Myriam Van Imschoot and visual artist Ludovic Burel he spoke about *Schreibstück* in a way that highlights the autonomy of the choreographer and issues of responsibility.<sup>42</sup> I have transcribed sections of the audio recording of Lehmen's voice, which are presented, like the other interview content of the thesis, on the right of the page. Lehmen stated:

*I must say that groups which are not close to this kind of work usually did the most interesting stuff. For example Klaus Jürgens from the Netherlands. They are a group which is really Dutch Dance Theatre. They have lots of props on stage. They sing and they play stories – they do that kind of stuff. Absolutely not my thing. [...] When they did their show I was shocked I must say! But now I think they did one of the most interesting things, because they were very honest in how they related to it.*

(Lehmen in Van Imschoot & Burel  
2005: 18:10-19:20)

Lehmen cites two aspects of Klaus Jürgens' version. One is Jürgens' group saying, in their performing of the theme "Explaining the piece" that "it's kind of conceptual" (Lehmen in Van Imschoot & Burel, 2005: 20:40) with "conceptual" spoken in a camped-up [arguably irreverent] tone. A second is their response to the directions for the work, which includes the instruction that performers should wear white T-shirts with their name written on the front. Jürgens and his performers wrote on their T-shirts, "Jérôme. And another. Xavier. And another French name" (Lehmen in Van Imschoot & Burel, 2005: 21:30-21:42). In these

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<sup>42</sup> This interview is part of a much larger project curated by Van Imschoot and Burel 'What's the Score?' – "an expanded publication on scores and notation systems employed in contemporary dance and performance practices from the turn of the millennium up to 2005" (Van Imschoot & Burel, no date).



examples we can see a complex poetics operating. Jürgens' group has taken on the responsibility that the structure demands, and done so in a manner that allows them to comment on the work – in their alluding to the French conceptual dance artists Jérôme Bel and Xavier Le Roy in an (apparently) disparaging manner. The groups' autonomy enables them to function independently of the author with the example given highlighting how the work can operate in ways that surprise its author. While Jürgens's groups' comments operate through a representational intent, they (also) operate within their self-contained component and alongside the other groups and their different decisions for the "themes." The capacity for their comments to function successfully as signification is blurred by the systematic presentation of the groups' different decisions on the "themes" as has been noted previously. The system itself does not support representation.

According to Lehmen a certain responsibility for the work remains invested in him as author, a responsibility that he thinks gave a certain permission to Jürgens and his group:

*[The piece] gave them for the first time I think, the perspective to relate at the same time - while they do a piece to relate to the piece - to the structure. And also, because it was not their piece, they could more easily take that position because they could give away part of the responsibility to the author.*<sup>43</sup>

(Lehmen in Van Imschoot & Burel  
2005: 19:58-20:27)

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<sup>43</sup> After performing the version he had choreographed, Jürgens told Lehmen, "We had such a hard time with the whole thing. And we really hated it. And we hated you. And we thought it's such a silly absolutely idiotic thing – but now we think it was good for us." Recounted by (a laughing) Thomas Lehmen (Lehmen in Van Imschoot & Burel, 2005: 21:55-22:11).

As previously noted (page 73), Klaus Jürgens' version was performed at Nottedance in 2003 alongside versions by British choreographer Peter Shenton and Mart Kangro from Estonia. In my interview with Shenton, he spoke of how lack of responsibility for certain aspects of the piece gave him a particular kind of freedom:

**PS:** *Dealing with the instructions in [the score] was for me very freeing [...] the bigger problems of being an artist are removed - which are: What is it? What is it about? Why am I doing it? Those sorts of things, which are the bigger questions that you ask of anything that you are making [...] those are questions for Thomas and not for me.*

(Shenton, 2013)<sup>44</sup>

Cultural and dance scholar Lucia Ruprecht has suggested that in *Schreibstück* there is a separation of “the authorial (conceptual) from the choreographic (pragmatic) function of the maker of the dances” (Ruprecht, 2007: 207), a suggestion which is echoed by Shenton’s description, above, of being liberated from certain authorial responsibilities, and is perhaps also suggested by Lehmen’s account of Jürgens’ actions earlier in this chapter (on page 78). Shenton finds a freedom in acting for the system through the agency that the system affords him. My interview with Shenton continued into a consideration of the questions that Shenton was concerned with:

**RI:** *What sort of questions were you asking yourself when working on *Schreibstück*?*

**PS:** *How can I make this really ‘good’? [...] I’m interested in things being truthful and funny. So it was interesting*

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<sup>44</sup> This, and all following direct quotes from Shenton, have been transcribed by the author from her interview with him. It is noted in the bibliography as Shenton, (2013).

*for me to do the themes 'Thinking', 'I believe' and 'My Personal Philosophy'*

(Shenton, P. 2013)

Although I have previously introduced the theme 'Thinking' (on page 76), all three themes are inserted here "in compassion towards the reader's predicament" (Williams, 2009).<sup>45</sup> Shenton continues after the insertion.

Theme [17] Thinking

Action: Each dancer performs a sequence of movements which is performed and fixed only in his or her mind, without enacting the movements spatially.

[...]

Theme [23] Personal Philosophy

Action: A dancer develops a philosophical text based on personal experience, in contrast to generalized, universal academic philosophy.

[...]

Theme [28] I Believe

Action: reciting a list of things and conditions in which the dancer really believes

(Lehmen, 2002a: unpaginated, formatting added)

**PS:** [continues] *and to take it seriously in a way and to actually do it, [...] partly because I don't like to tell people my personal philosophy or what I believe [...] in my art practice. I have a sort of sense that there's something very negative about being straightforward about that in terms of your relationship with the audience and allowing people to agree or disagree with you. I found that really challenging and also then really interesting to find a way to do it and sort of keep within my concerns.*

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<sup>45</sup> This is a phrase used by David Williams in a discussion with him about writing (Williams, 2009).

**RI: *So in order to do that did you keep on being truthful and funny? Did you orientate it around that? Or were you not truthful in order to deal with your own concerns?***

**PS: *My recollection is that I did both of those things. In the 'My Personal Philosophy' section we [Peter Shenton, James Flynn and Guy Dartnell] wrote a song that's called 'Nothing's Important', so we sang a song about what you do not being important, what you say not being important and that you're not important in the audience and that we're not important [the performers] which I thought was really good. I liked it. We wrote that together and sung it together.***

*In the 'I believe' section what we did was, I made up some potential things that I could believe in that were sort of partial jokes. So there were some things that were leading towards jokes and I don't think I said anything that I actually believed in.*

**RI: *Are you saying that you were justifying that approach as part of your belief?***

**PS: *Yes I really was.***

**[Laughter]**

(Shenton, 2013)

Shenton interestingly chose to speak of those themes in *Schreibstück* that are less invested in instructions that invite representational actions and spoke

instead of themes that are more concerned with philosophical thinking. It seems that what's at stake in Shenton's dealing with these themes is the negotiation with his responsibility towards the system and the difficulty of the particular tasks. In the case of the themes discussed, this difficulty includes the kinds of conceptual concerns that inform Shenton's thinking as a choreographer. Shenton's solution is one that the system allows. It is one in which he embeds his own conceptual concerns into his component version of *Schreibstück*. In doing this Shenton is not entirely limited to the pragmatic function that Ruprecht suggests is the role of choreographer in *Schreibstück* (discussed on page 80). Shenton's decisions assert a conceptual function, although it is present in a 'quiet' and limited way, at a micro level in the system. The larger or louder conceptual function operates through the macro structure, the systematic procedures that Lehmen has written.

Klaus Jürgens' and Peter Shenton's compositional decisions indicate a complex politics of thinking happening and in which diverse thinking can co-exist in a productive co-creation. I have argued that choreographer and performers are required to think and act with both autonomy and responsibility towards the system. The autonomy is linked to there being no measure of what the author 'wants' beyond the responsibility to the score. The autonomy is also a *requirement* of the autopoietic system; each component is required to 'produce itself.' This particular structuring of agency through the autonomy and responsibility of the independent components of *Schreibstück* presents in performance (what audience might read as) a side by side of relations.

### **Relating side by side**

In *Schreibstück* the three component versions co-exist. The different components of the system may be witnessed in relation from a spectatorial perspective. By this I mean that the spectator in seeing the different versions might *read* relations between them by way of similarity and differences in the

multiple renditions of the score. There is no *actual* relation; there is no event of relation occurring between the components. It is in the operations of agency and the lack of relation between that *Schreibstück* both achieves the move away from a representational system and at the same time is limited in the extent to which it enacts a *non-representational poetics* in the way that I use the term in this thesis.

The *non-representational poetics* of this thesis, as discussed on pages 3-9, is concerned with perceptible *acts of thinking* that function to generate the choreographic event: modes of thinking that are other-than representational; modes that operate without recourse to recognition. Although the work that arises through the agency of the parties to *Schreibstück* may be understood as non-representational in its being witnessed, for the most part it is not produced through *acts of thinking* in the manner suggested here.

I have shown that in *Schreibstück* the thinking that is generated in performers is often, but not exclusively, representational. The system limits possibilities for *acts of thinking* that do a producing, experienced as such by the performers. The thinking that *Schreibstück* permits is for the (re)producing of the system. The live event stages the producing of a system with self-contained components operating for the system, together, separately, side by side.

### **Conclusion**

*Schreibstück* expands Bel's critique by exposing the structural operations of a system that operates through the agency of those who act in the roles that the system prescribes. They are not representatives of a system, but agents in a system. Each role includes accepting responsibility towards the system and acting autonomously in the (re)producing of the component part. Each performance of *Schreibstück* is an unexpected producing in that what arises

when all three version are performed cannot be known in advance by any one party.

*Schreibstück* deals with the structural level of choreographic making, that disperse the sense of what the product is, and that makes the processes of its production visible *as* the work. It moves towards *non-representational* modes of working as it orientates participants' engagement away from signification of individual actions towards structural operations; and in that what arises in performance is always, to an extent at least, a *particular* arising in the juxtaposition of the three versions as seen by audience. It is limited in that the fixed aspects of the system keeps the components working alongside each other, each self-contained and self-producing. What is (re)produced is the operation of a system. It is this that the system permits. It is the system that produces; relations do not produce.

*Schreibstück* differs from the other works developed and examined in this thesis in which thinking and agency variously operate in the event of relations; it is in the relational event that a producing happens. The following chapter discusses my work in collaboration with Katrina Brown, *what remains and is to come*, and a producing in the event of material relations.

## Chapter 4

### Materiality and intra-relations in *what remains and is to come*

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses my work *what remains and is to come*, a performance installation in collaboration with Katrina Brown, in which we work with materials - with paper, charcoal, body and breath.<sup>46</sup> I argue that, while it shares with *Schreibstück* a concern with a systematic mode of working, the processes through which it has been developed and through which it is performed, extend more fully into *non-representational* modes. Chapter three discussed *Schreibstück* as a system that operates through the agency of the separate, self-contained components, and as a system that exposes its structural operations. In this chapter I argue that in *what remains and is to come*, agency operates in the activation of intra-relational material processes. Also, rather than exposing structural operations, the performance exposes the processual operations of those material intra-relations.

The chapter begins with a description of the live performance event. It then gives an account of the research and development of the work, discussing the growing concern towards the capacities in and of materials and the emergence of a particular systematic approach in working-with materials. *what remains and is to come* has been performed at various venues including Het Veem Theatre Amsterdam, Nightingale Theatre Brighton, KARST Gallery Plymouth and Backlit Gallery in Nottingham, this latter as part of Dance4's Dance in Galleries

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<sup>46</sup> Dance artists who have worked with paper and charcoal in performance include, and perhaps most famously, Trisha Brown. In her *It's a Draw/Live Feed* (2003) Brown improvises a series of large-scale drawings that are presented to audience through live video feed. While a similarity exists in the horizontal positioning of large-scale paper on the floor, the improvisational aspect of Brown's approach is a particular difference from the systematic mode that is elaborated in this chapter on *what remains and is to come*. A fuller explication of Brown's practices is beyond the scope of the present research.



festival.<sup>47</sup>

*what remains and is to come* continues to evolve and in response to each space and context in which it is presented. It is notable that, like the other works addressed in the thesis, this project has extended into print with the artist book *what remains and is to come: a document*, (see appendix 2). (This book is presented with the thesis, as previously noted, as documentation of the live performance work that was examined and includes materials that are beyond the scope of the thesis.) This book contains scores that are presented to the reader as documents of the performance. This is different from scores that, like the others addressed in this thesis, are intended for others to use. For the purpose of the thesis, it is the performance itself that is addressed, with the scores being re-presented in this chapter as documents of the live event.

### **The performance event and some documents**

The work is performed in a large theatre or gallery space. The audience enters and finds, lying on the floor, interspersed through the space, large sheets of paper. The organization of the papers varies in response to the particular space. The layout invites audience movement through the space. Most of the papers are black, covered in tiny, broken, crumbled pieces of charcoal. One paper is white. Charcoal sticks are arranged in rows across one third of this paper. Bunches of charcoal sticks lie on the edge of this paper.

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<sup>47</sup> Dates of these performances were: Het Veem Theatre Amsterdam on 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Backlit Gallery, Nottingham on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2013, Nightingale Theatre, Brighton 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014, KARST Gallery, Plymouth 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014.



**Image 5:** Set up for the performance *what remains and is to come* at KARST, Plymouth 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014

There are three sections to the piece, which Brown and I call ‘breathing’, ‘marking’ and ‘printing’. The ‘breathing’ section acknowledges the actuality of the situation of performance and ‘welcomes’ the audience. We breathe in unison, gazing at the audience, making eye contact, shifting the gaze from person to person and greeting audience through sound that is not speech, but is the material event of a composed score for the breath. There is a visceral actuality in the carrying out of this composition – one that demands of the performer a precise attention towards the body and the act of breathing, and that brings her into an enhanced perceptibility to her incrementally changing breathing. The score for this section follows:

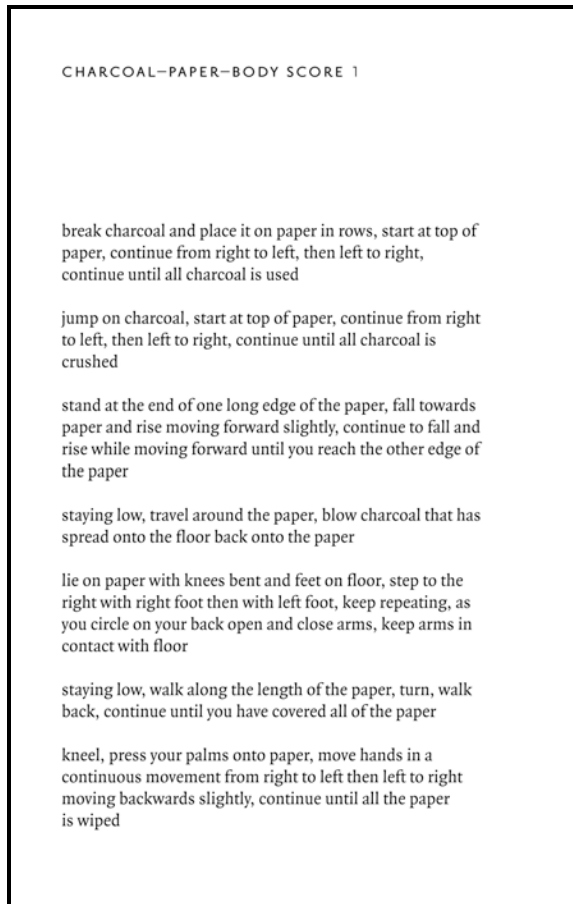
BODY-BREATH SCORE		
silent inhale count	sound exhale count	times
normal	7	1
6	6	1
5	5	2
4	4	3
3	3	4
2	2	5
1	1	6
> > > > >	> > > > >	=
sound inhale fast	sound exhale fast	times
< < < < <	< < < < <	=
silent inhale	sound exhale	times
1	1	5
1	1.5	4
1	2	3
1	2.5	2
1	3	1
1	3.5	1
1	4	1
1	4.5	1
1	5	1
1	5.5	1
1	6	1
1	6.5	1
1	7	ongoing

**Image 6:** 'Body-breath score'  
reproduced from *what remains and is come: a document*

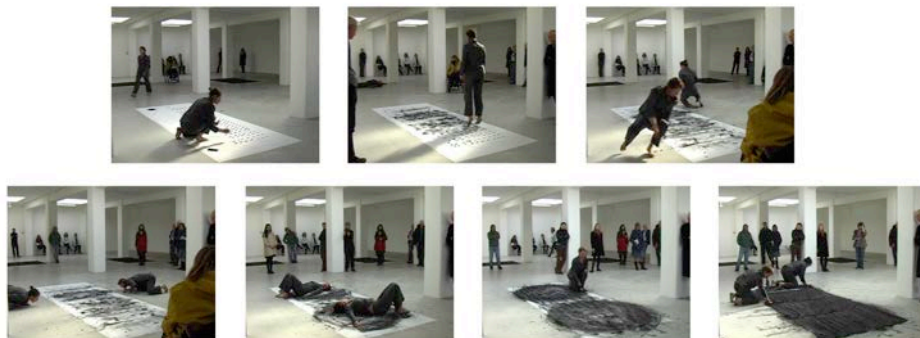
The performers are simultaneously present with and towards audience; an audience that is included in the situation through eye contact and through the affectivity of breath's becoming perceptible, becoming audible, in and through the space. In this score the attention to breath and attention towards public is one in which, for the performer, body and mind are evidently and perceptibly working in unity. The demand of the score is such that the attention is fully occupied in the perceptual complexity of the composition in the moment of performance.

Following the 'breathing' section is 'marking.' In this section the actions are work like. There are seven stages. Each stage is repeated until it reaches a kind-of completion. At each stage there is an evident increasing of relations between the materials. The

performers' attention is on the task in hand. The score for this section follows:

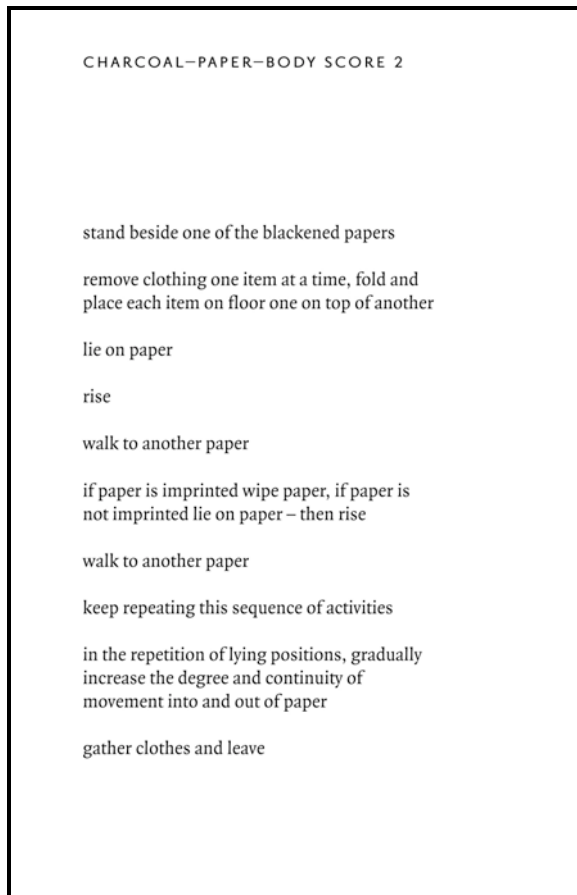


**Image 7:** 'Charcoal-paper-body score 1'  
reproduced from *what remains and is come: a document*

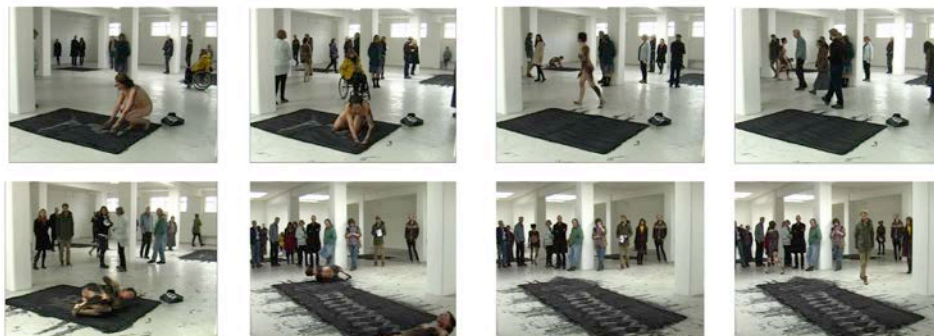


**Image 8:** Series of video stills showing the marking section from the performance *what remains and is to come* at KARST, Plymouth, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014

At the end of this section, all the papers are black. Then the 'printing' section begins. The increasing of relations between materials continues. The actions are work like. The performers' attention remains on the task in hand. The score for this section follows:



**Image 9:** 'Charcoal-paper-body score 2'  
reproduced from *what remains and is to come: a document*



**Image 10:** Series of video stills showing the printing section from the performance *what remains and is to come* at KARST, Plymouth, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014

*Charcoal-paper-body scores 1 and 2* are descriptions of processes that are set in motion in each performance: processes that activate and simultaneously expose increasing stages of material intra-relations. They also generate a mode of recording.

### **Recording in the performance event**

During both the 'marking' and the 'printing' sections, there is a recording on the paper and on the body: a form of capture in the 'meeting' of body, paper and charcoal. In the 'printing' section, when there is an ongoing embedding of mark and print in paper and on body, this is perhaps particularly evident. Issues of recording, as noted in chapter one are present in all five works addressed in this thesis.

I have previously noted that the written elements of the other works, each in distinct ways, function as a kind of record and as a means for the works to be activated in a future time. Lehmen's score for *Schreibstück* is a record of Lehmen's intent for the work. It has become a record of past versions and a proposition for possible future versions (page 29). Le Roy's *General Rules Score for Project* is a record of the processes undertaken by Le Roy and his collaborators in developing *Project* and an invitation to others to carry out those processes (page 29). My written work *Perception Frames* is (for the most part) a record of processes undertaken in the development of the work and a proposition for others to enter into perceptual sensing processes in a present (or future) moment of choreographic practice (page 30). Fiona Templeton's text for *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* (Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a) is also a record, but differently so. It is not a record of processes previously undertaken, but a live recording of Templeton's process in watching a show with the task of articulating it for a future audience (page 29). A recording *in* the performance event likewise occurs in *what remains and is to*

*come* in the activation of relations between paper, body and charcoal. In each stage of the relational event there is a recording that is then erased, or embedded, in the activation of the stage that follows. The possibility of future processes occur in the event itself, the past that is embedded, the present imprinting and the always possibility of an ongoing erasing and imprinting.

*what remains and is to come* has grown through the research trajectory of developing conditions for a *non-representational poetics* of choreography, and in which there was an intention to make ‘something’ that was generated through practical choreographic research in *non-representational* thinking. The research method in *what remains and is to come* was that of collaborative dialogue.

### **Collaborative dialogue and constructing situations for thinking**

In chapter one (pages 36-37) I suggested that collaborative dialogue is a method that is conducive to the research aim of developing conditions for a *non-representational poetics* of choreography. *Non-representational poetics* as I use it (introduced on pages 3-9) responds to Gilles Deleuze’s call, born out of his extended critique on representation, for “the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself” (Deleuze, 2004:176). Collaborative dialogue, as method, is concerned with the *activity* of thought and *how* thought arises in choreographic practices. It responds to philosopher Isabelle Stengers’ call (as introduced on pages 57-58) for the creation of situations in practice that “make us think and not recognise” (Stengers, 2005: 185). It acknowledges that a particular concern needs to be given towards *how* situations for thinking (in each particular practice) are constructed. In approaching this *how*, in the context of this choreographic research inquiry, there has been the need to firstly address the question of creating conditions that might most trouble the capacity to formulate (actual) choreographic possibilities in advance of the situation of making. The method of

collaborative dialogue, which aims to begin without a theme and without pre-existing choreographic content, is perhaps a method capable of generating such conditions. The notion of collaborative dialogue as practice as research method was my inventive response to the research aim of developing conditions for a *non-representational poetics of choreography*.

In writing this last sentence I experience a pause in the flow of my account of the research activity. I question myself:

***Did you come up with the notion of ‘collaborative dialogue’? Or was it a term that arose through dialogue?***

*Well, actually, come to think of it, I can’t be entirely sure. What I do know is that the frame for the mode of collaborating that came to be known as ‘collaborative dialogue’ was quite clear to me before we began. It was clear that the mode was about coming together to generate together without pre-existing themes or materials and for a process that was neither devising nor improvising.*

(Irvine, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013)

The method of collaborative dialogue requires the parties to the dialogue to extend their creative process and methods of making in ways other-than towards what they already know. Collaborative dialogue as method creates an initial framing of conditions for *non-representational* thinking.



The collaborative dialogue with Katrina Brown began in 2011 with an agreement to bring no theme as such, no pre-existing choreographic material<sup>48</sup> and to make an as yet unknown ‘something’ that would emerge through the dialogue. What that ‘something’ might be was not named. We each brought our own interests and concerns many of which were mutual. Shared aspects included an interest in movement practices distinct from codified dance practices and an interdisciplinary approach to choreography. Additional to this, was Brown’s use of paper and charcoal in her choreographic drawing practice. In addition, I brought my (theoretical) concerns with *non-representational poetics*. Early in the process I carried out an exploratory self-interview:

***In your concern with ‘non-representational poetics’ it seems that you have something quite specific that you are bringing to the dialogue ...***

*Yes. My interest is in researching and developing practices that operate through something like thinking in the event of making and doing choreography - through situations that bring forward thinking in what is happening and without an idea or image already present of what that might ‘do.’ Thinking in what is happening would (I think) necessitate the activation of a process of thinking, in which thinking becomes an event, an occurrence – and in this case in choreographic practice. At this stage it seems to me that the specificity of particular processes are really important - and that it is the specificity of particular processes that might contribute to developing and articulating a non-representational poetics of choreography.*

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<sup>48</sup> Here choreographic material is understood as set actions, stillnesses, phrases of movement and such like. This is distinct from ‘materials of practice’, e.g. paper and charcoal.

*So yes, I am bringing a very particular interest in investigating specific practices that activate processes of 'thinking' that in turn makes a 'something' that I cannot name beforehand. It isn't about someone following my ideas for what a work, or even a process, might be. It's about 'thinking' together. Each 'together' will always be a particular situation of thinking in what is happening.*

(Irvine, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011)

Theoretical threads relating to Gilles Deleuze's "thinking in thought itself" (Deleuze, 2004: 176) and Isabelle Stengers' situations that "make us think and not recognise" (Stengers, 2005: 185) are present in this self-interview. The matters discussed are orientated in and with the choreographic practices, and in particular towards the approach taken to working with another artist. A self-reflexive concern operates to question *how* my theoretical concerns with modes of thinking impose on another artist.

***It seems that there may be an imbalance, or even contradiction, here with you bringing such a particular set of concerns. In what way do you understand the political and relational aspects of this?***

(Irvine, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011)

Reading this question now, almost three years later, I see a broader concern operating that is to do with questioning how my bringing such particular theoretical concerns, in the way I have done, might shape the modes of constructing and producing that can be possible. Implicit, though not articulated then, was a questioning of how my contouring of an approach to working in relations might already designate what can happen. My concern

then was that the approach used would constrain the intent of all parties, and that intent would be orientated in an inquiry that does not pre-suppose what is possible. Three years ago my response to the above question was:

*I am coming with a particular research interest [non-representational ways of making and doing choreography]. Since this seeks the activation of “thinking” in the event, it suggests a need for responsiveness in and with the situation. I am coming with a willingness to work-with a particular situation, without knowing in advance what that might mean. So there is a very particular openness operating in terms of the political and relational potential of the approach ...*

(Irvine, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011)

How I see this now is that the important aspect, in terms of creating situations for *non-representational* thinking, is the combination of constraining intention within a situation that is open. These two features run through the works that are addressed in the following chapters. The openness of collaborative dialogue that is described here is at the making stage of choreographic practice, at the level of constructing. It operates prior to the existence of a performance structure. Collaborative dialogue demands an ongoing responsiveness to the situation, an ongoing willingness to operate with uncertainty. There is also - in working with another, and with an attitude of non-pre-intent - an extending of openness towards the other person. And it is a *particular* artist with whom one is working. There is no one-way of relating in collaborative dialogue. All of this demands a care towards not bringing pre-existing patterns and structures of relating to the situation; the issue here is ‘care’ rather than a belief that one can unequivocally achieve such an approach in practice. This in turn implicates an ongoing openness to questioning one’s motivation at all stages. These various

strands indicate that openness is at the level of process and relations.

Collaborative dialogue may be understood as an experiment in relations: an attempt to construct dynamic environments that might force the occurrence of *acts of thinking* between and beyond two people in a particular situation of choreographic practice.

### **Attending towards thinking *in* what is happening**

The attitude that collaborative dialogue seeks to foster is one in which looking for ‘interesting’ material is replaced by a concern towards what is happening in the working and creating together. Within this, the orientation of attention is towards the situation itself. In the case of working with Katrina Brown the situation involved the two of us and the materials of our choreographic practices: paper, charcoal, and the material more often associated with choreography, the body. An initial approach was to set up situations in which one worked with the materials while the other watched, interspersing this activity with periods of talking. The task of the doer was to engage with the materials, to work with what was in the situation rather than to bring an idea to the situation. The task of the watcher was to attend to what was happening in the event of the working. The word ‘attend’ indicates the need for the watcher’s presence in experiencing what is happening, which is qualitatively different from her developing an opinion *about* what is happening. This approach led to a growing sense of relation-with the materials. By way of example here is an account gathered in a self-interview of a moment in which the human tendency to subtly plan in advance of action was noticed:

*One of the first activities was working on the floor with a large area of paper and charcoal sticks, one of us working with these the other watching, swapping roles and repeating this many times. I was observing Katrina who was lying on her front. In her hand touching the*

*paper was the charcoal. She was making a repetitive movement that left a trace on the paper. One of the things I noticed was that when her eye and hand were co-ordinated there was a different quality to the activity from when the eye was disengaged. This difference was something that I 'felt' as a watcher in the atmosphere of the way the activity was carried out. I also noticed that when the eye was co-ordinated with the hand, that as watcher I 'knew' what would happen before it happened – I was anticipating the mark being left. I shared this observation. Then each of us examined the activity of moving with eye-hand co-ordination and without. We found a qualitatively different sense of 'knowing' present in each of our experiences as doers when eye-hand co-ordination was present. This was felt as a tendency (sometimes very slight) to know and plan what the hand would or could do. We also noticed a desire in the body for this co-ordination, that the eye is drawn towards the hand. This led to the decision to work without eye-hand co-ordination and ultimately to not hold the charcoal in the hand.*

(Irvine, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2012)

Hand eye co-ordination functions for the survival of the human and is instrumental in human capacity to use tools. Charcoal is commonly understood as a drawing tool. A tool is defined as “a thing used to help perform a job” (Oxford Dictionary, 2013b). The decision to not use hand eye co-ordination and to not hold the charcoal in the hand opened a different kind of relationship with charcoal. Charcoal was disengaged from its role as tool for a human intent of performing the 'job' of drawing. This was the initial shift towards a

commitment to making in relations-with materials, one that brought forward a fuller engagement with materials, with their properties and with their capacities.

This insight around making in relations-with material nuanced the quality of attention in a fuller sense of non-separation from the event, towards a quality of being present to-and-in the perception of the event in its occurring, towards an attitude of impartiality, a practice of non-interfering and a practice of *just* noticing what is happening. Operating in a *non-representational* register, it quietly resists presupposition. It illuminates the activity of thought in its action-occurring, and in this case, extended awareness beyond human actions.

### **Material practices and non-human agency**

In continuing to work with paper, charcoal and bodily actions and with this quality of attending *in* what is happening in relations-with materials, an awareness of micro events that the materials ‘performed’ came forward. For example: a charcoal stick releases sound as it breaks; charcoal splinters and spreads under physical pressure; paper absorbs increasing amounts of charcoal as the charcoal breaks up; skin contact removes charcoal from paper; charcoal clings to skin and clothing.

Through firstly giving an account of what was noticed, such as the micro events just described, and then entering into a more reflective and discursive mode of conversation, a particular understanding emerged: material being acted on by another material causes change: it causes something to happen. Implicit here is an acknowledgement of an agential capacity of both human and non-human materials. The sense of an agential capacity of a distinct material capable of acting on another material was an initial impression, an impression that did not last.

In continuing to work with a quality of attending and noticing what was happening in the situation a further insight came forward. This was that change occurs in the *event* of what happens between materials: it happens in relations. Moreover, change occurs not through a distinct material acting on another material, not through a subject acting on an object in an inter-relational exchange. When change happens materials are each/all implicated as agential in that change. The body's capacity to jump causes pressure to break the charcoal - while the charcoal's capacity to crumble causes it to cling to skin, and to paper - while paper's capacity to absorb causes the charcoal to meld with the paper.

The 'change' moments that I have articulated here, are processual events that have been noticed and have, in a sense, 'arisen' through the quality of attending *in* what is happening. They can perhaps be conceived of as *acts of thinking* with materials. This 'change' can also be understood as the formation of a boundary – as a moment in which *something* arises. The formation of boundaries and the question of how things come into being are concerns that occupy science philosopher Karen Barad, whose agential realist ontology was introduced on pages 55-57. This is further discussed below and reflected on in relation to the creative practices under discussion in the self-interview that follows.

Science philosopher Karen Barad is concerned with the accountability of boundary formation and with questions of how things come into being. Barad's agential realism argues for a "*performative* account of discursive practices" one that "insists on understanding, thinking, observing and theorizing as practices of engagement with, and as part of, the world in which we have our being" (Barad, 2007:133). Barad proposes an understanding of agential capacities that inheres not in things but in relations: a world coming into being not through the

interaction of pre-existing bounded objects – but through the inseparability of agentially intra-acting phenomena (Barad, 2007:139).

Barad's is a post-humanist account in which the human is accounted (and accountable) in her engagement in, and as part of, situations. Barad distinguishes post-humanist from post-human (Barad, 2007: 136).<sup>49</sup> Her posthumanism (and this research) is concerned with human and non-human co-existing. It "marks the practice of accounting for the boundary-making practices by which the 'human' and its others are differentially delineated and defined" (Barad, 2007: 136). Her use of the term posthumanism, is one that "[takes] issue with human exceptionalism while being accountable for the role we play in the differential constitution and differential positioning of the human among other creatures (both living and non-living)" (Barad, 2007: 136).

Shared concerns present in Karen Barad's agential realism and in the choreographic practices of *what remains and is to come* include concerns towards: the activity of boundary-making; agency and material practices; a human presence that is other-than that of subject acting on the material world and a questioning of how something comes into being. These mutual concerns raise a particular problem in this writing:

***How do you understand the relation between Barad's concerns and how you have been working in this choreographic project?***

*I don't want to say that there is a correspondence between what she is saying and what we are doing. I certainly feel a resonance between her concerns and the*

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<sup>49</sup> She states: "I want to be clear that I am not interested in postmodernist celebrations (or demonizations) of the posthuman as living testimonies to the death of the human, nor as the next stage of Man" (Barad, 2007: 136).



*practices we have been engaging with. And I'd say that my turning to the form and register of the self-interview in this moment is a response to Barad's concerns.*

*Perhaps this shift in register makes a kind of boundary making visible – and accountable. It's my attempt to allow what I've called 'resonance' and at the same time to avoid explaining a particular arts practice as 'corresponding' with a theoretical position that pre-exists the arts practice – and that pre-exists my attempt to articulate that practice in language. The self-interview form exposes myself as present in doing this present explaining. Perhaps this register can function as acknowledgement of my presence in the two situations: the writing here, now - and the creative practice there, then with materials.*

*Barad insists on performativity - that boundaries are formed in the event of something happening, rather than there being pre-determined boundaries. I'd say that the practices of 'what remains and is to come' are occurrences<sup>50</sup> of the concerns Barad highlights.<sup>51</sup> These occurrences happen in a particular practice and a particular situation: the particular choreographic situation. Perhaps in 'what remains and is to come' there*

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<sup>50</sup> I have purposefully used 'occurrences' here - the present participle form of occurring used as plural noun - rather than occurrences, in order to highlight the process of intra-action: that intra-action is something that happens.

<sup>51</sup> This reference to Karen Barad relates to the discussion prior to this self-interview on pages 1001-102, and earlier on pages 55-57. For Barad "the primary ontological unit is not independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties but rather *phenomena*. [...] It is through agential intra-action that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and that particular concepts (that is particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful" (Barad, 2007: 139).

*is a particular occurring of the kind of practices she is calling for. And 'kind of' is not the 'same as'... I feel that what has arisen within the choreographic practice is that I have become aware of moments in which an event of differentiating happens and that it happens when material relations are activated.*

(Irvine, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013)

Leading into the discussion on Barad, I noted particular moments in which materials – in relations - 'performed', identifying these moments as 'micro events' (page 100). They are moments in which something happens, in such moments something, in a choreographic sense, is being produced. In Barad's sense, something is coming into being through the inseparability of agentially intra-acting phenomena (Barad, 2007: 139). The differentiating moments of these micro events arose through treating materials as equal, rather than as tools for a prior intent, and secondly through a quality of attending *in* the situation of working with materials - which I earlier called a mode of thinking in a *non-representational* register (page 100). The differentiating moments arose consequent to that mode of thinking and are I suggest instances of *non-representational* composing.

### **Differentiating moments and systematic accumulation**

The insight around the relational event of differentiating led to an ongoing detailed inquiry into the properties and capacities of paper, charcoal and body, not as individual materials, but as materials in the activity of relations, that is: in the event of intra-relating. Continuing to work with attending *in* what is happening, ongoing stages of increasing intra-relations became evident. For example: when charcoal was crushed it had greater capacity to spread and for paper to absorb it than when the charcoal was uncrushed. This was the

beginning of a more systematic inquiry into incremental stages of increasing material relations.

The incremental increasing, having been noticed rather than planned for, offered a means to continue. It indicated a kind of logic in/of the situation. By this I don't mean a pre-existing logic, but a kind of logic that the materials intra-relating generated - a logic particular to the properties and capacities of body, charcoal and paper in relations. This shift towards a systematic incremental increasing of material relations functioned to further constrain wilful choices. The measure of an incremental increase was not in relation to what was liked or desired, but in the emerging and evident accumulation of stages of relations. The initial incremental stages are identified in charcoal-paper-body score 1 (image 7 on page 90). It culminates in the paper being blackened, being completely covered in charcoal.



**Image 11:** Paper blackened with charcoal, prior to performance of *what remains and is to come* at KARST, Plymouth 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014

In following the logic of the systematic and incremental increasing, Brown and I reach an impasse - of sorts, a completion – of sorts. In this (sort of) 'completion' of the blackened paper, material capacities are present. These include the

capacity of charcoal to cling to body, for skin to absorb charcoal, for paper to record the bodily movement on charcoal. These capacities, activated in the intra-relational event of a body in contact with charcoal covered paper, produce capture: a figurative appearance. With this, issues of representation are implicated, seemingly perhaps at odds with the *non-representational* intent of the creative research. The capacity for capture has arisen in the situation of what is happening in the ongoing systematic inquiry in material intra-relations. This capacity is acknowledged as part of the situation we are now in.

### **Representation, ongoing accumulating and perception**

We lie on the blackened paper.



**Image 12:** Performer lying on the charcoal covered paper at Dartington SPACE, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013

In developing the work we investigated how it was to remain clothed. We found, in the imprint generated, that the contemporary cultural aspect of the human form came forward in ways that overpowered the materiality of the processes. The clothing that functioned as work-wear in the earlier part of the performance, when worn in the imprinting existed as a further material presence between body and charcoal. The culturally specific aspect of clothing dated the imprint generated as a 21<sup>st</sup> century figure. It opened a direction away

from the rigorous incremental and systematic accumulation of material relational processes between charcoal, paper and body that we were 'following.' And so we remove our clothing.<sup>52</sup>

In this removing, the materiality of the body remains present. Issues relating to the female nude in western arts practices are now part of the situation. The apparent passivity of the lying figure evokes perhaps the female artists model, the tradition of the female nude, the objectification of the female form presented for the gaze of the spectator. In making the decision to remove our clothing, to become nude, to leave behind an imprint - a figurative appearance of the body, the 'problems' of representation and objectification of the female arise.

We each raise our heads and gaze out at the audience, making eye contact, seeing and being seen.

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<sup>52</sup> The artist whose work might most readily be called up in the context of the nude female body and mark making practices is Yves Klein (1928 - 1962). Klein famously used models as a 'living brush', directing them to create live paintings in which he, the artist, "became a conductor whose role was to orchestrate the individuals making his paintings for him in a spectacle of artistic direction" (Warr, 2012: 54). While the actions performed and outward appearance of the imprints produced in *what remains and is to come* might bear some apparent similarities with Klein's work there are evident differences. In *what remains and is to come* we female performers are in a different agential relation to the work being made and to the materials being worked with than Klein's performers. While Klein used the bodies of female models as (his) tools, we have relinquished the notion of tools for the job of a human intent, replacing this with a concern to work-with materials and with their capacities in relation. More than fifty years after Klein we are in another context, though one that acknowledges Klein's legacy.



**Image 13:** Performers seeing audience and being seen  
video still from performance of *what remains and is to come*  
KARST, Plymouth 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Seeing and being seen we are mutually subject and object of the gaze, a subject gazing towards, in the presence of being 'objectively' gazed upon. We continue to give attention in the material relational event, sensing the body in contact with charcoal, its weight pressing onto paper, the breath moving through the body, the eyes meeting and receiving the gaze of another(s). Attention has extended to encompass the perceptibility of ourselves in this moment with audience. The outward gaze quietly refuses reduction to an object presence that 'represents' the female nude. The antecedent practice of female nudity and objectification is 'held' in our attention in the perceptually charged mutuality of seeing and being seen, of being subject and object.

Of particular interest to this research is the way that this seeing and being seen brings forward in the performer an enhanced perceptibility of her perception. This is in some ways similar to the quality of perceptual attention that was introduced early in this chapter (on page 89) when I described the performing of the body-breath score of the 'breathing' section. I identified then, that for the performer carrying out this score that her attention is fully occupied in the perceptual complexity of the activity. In both the 'breathing' section and in the

seeing and being seen moment, the performers' thinking is operating in a perceptual mutuality of body and mind attention in an immediacy of body-mind thinking. The perceptibility of perception continues to be addressed in the chapters that follow. Qualities of attention in working with seeing and being seen are discussed in chapter seven (pages 163-164) in relation to *Perception Frames*.

The performers' perceptually charged mutuality of seeing and being seen - their being both subject and object in the midst of lying on the blackened paper - provides the conditions to continue. The incremental accumulation of intra-relational material processes goes on ...

We each rise from the paper. An imprint remains. We continue with the activity of charcoal-paper-body score 2 (image 9 on page 91) with lying, rising and wiping. In following through with incremental accumulations there is a progression from stillness and figurative appearance towards greater and greater degrees of movement into and out of the paper, producing more and more abstraction in the imprints produced. We lie and rise and wipe, laying print upon print, an embedding, a recording, a preserving that remains even as it disappears.



**Image 14:** Collage of photographic images of the project *what remains and is to come*. Lower left following performance at Nightingale Theatre, Brighton, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014. All others at Dartington SPACE 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013

### Conclusion

*what remains and is to come* operates through the activation of intra-relational material processes within which agency on the part of human and non-human elements is operative. The agential-relational processes, activated in performance, constitute the coming into being of the work. These processes have been developed through a *non-representational* approach to making through the method of collaborative dialogue, through the quality of attending and noticing of what is happening in the activities of working with material, and then through the systematic mode of accumulating stages of intra-relations. The systematic activation of incrementally increasing stages of intra-relations enacted in performance highlights the processual and relational operations, distinct from structural operations.



Modes of thinking that have been identified in this chapter include being present in a mutuality of seeing and being seen - which is discussed further in relation to my work *Perception Frames* in chapter seven (pages 163-164). Qualities of giving attention *in* what is happening have also been identified. Issues of attention are woven into the three chapters that follow, in particular in relation to constraining attention in ways that bring forward an immediacy of action arising in the performance event. The perceptibility of perception in the constraining of attention is introduced in the chapter that follows on Xavier Le Roy's *Project*.

## Chapter 5

### Social processes, decisions and perception in Xavier Le Roy's *Project*

#### Introduction

This chapter examines four scores that relate to *Project* (2003) by the French choreographer Xavier Le Roy that was performed at Nottdance in 2004 – a work in which game playing is presented as choreography. Three of the scores, *3 Games Game*, *The Descriptive Score*, *The Dramaturgy of The Performance Event* (Le. Roy, 2010: 102-115), relate to the performance work and are examined through my reading of them. I argue that the structural constraints of these scores, which draw on the logic of games, enable agency to operate through relations between performers, unlike in Lehmen's *Schreibstück* in which agency operates through the independent component parts of his system (as discussed in chapter three). Furthermore, I argue that the constraints limit pre-intent on the part of the performers and hone a readiness towards unplanned actions so orientating thinking in a *non-representational* register. The fourth score, *The General Rules Score* (Le. Roy, 2010: 106), re-calls processes undertaken in the development of *Project* and invites their re-activation. It contains instructions for processes to enter into with others to make games and rules for a choreographic event. It is this score that is primarily addressed in this chapter, examined through an activation of it.

Drawing on the research workshop 'towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' undertaken with seventeen participants in which I worked with *The General Rules Score* over four days, I suggest that this score sets in motion social processes that functioned to collectively produce decisions for games.<sup>53</sup> In particular I highlight how these decisions were experienced as arising in the situation and in the processes it engendered, distinct from through individual

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<sup>53</sup> The research workshop was held at Siobhan Davies Studios, London 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

intent. I suggest that a *non-representational* way of ‘making’ was achieved in working with Le Roy’s *General Rules Score*.

In my discussion of the performing of the games that were made, I identify a particular quality of thinking that was brought forward and that contributes to *non-representational* ways of ‘doing’ choreography. This is that when the performer’s perceptibility towards (her own) perception is brought forward, there is for her an enhanced alertness in the immediacy of the event. This staves off re-active and automatic responses and brings an increased sense of the event of mind-body thinking. This is identified as an important insight in the research inquiry and is developed further in the ongoing research into the making of *Perception Frames*, which is discussed in chapter seven. This chapter begins with contextual information about Le Roy’s *Project*, prior to introducing the scores.

### **Producing, perception and recognizing**

The performance work *Project* grew out of Xavier Le Roy’s long research project *E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S.*, which addressed process product relations. Beginning in 1998, *E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S.* took a critical position towards conventional modes of production; it investigated the possibility of presenting a production process as a product (Le Roy in Hantelmann & Le Roy, 2003: unpaginated).

*E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S.* involved groups of dancers and choreographers in various European cities working together, using a variety of formats including workshops, collective works by different participants and workshop presentations of “temporary results” (Husemann, 2004: 28). Explicitly research orientated and purposefully occupying spaces other than theatre spaces *E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S.* sought to escape the expectations of theatrical production (Le Roy in Hantelmann, & Le Roy, 2003: unpaginated). It led to Le Roy working with large groups of performers investigating process/product questions using games and rules.

In his interview with Dorothea von Hantelmann in 2003, the year that *Project* was premiered, Le Roy discussed his interest from the time of his earlier work *Self-Unfinished* (1998) in which he worked with “fragmenting, dismembering [...] to explore what the limits of my body can produce” (Le Roy in Hantelmann & Le Roy, 2003: unpaginated). The reception of that work seemed “to emphasise the idea of a body in parts and created an image or a metaphor for a schizophrenic body” (Le Roy in Hantelmann, & Le Roy, 2003: unpaginated). The indicated mismatch between artistic intention and spectator reading of the work raised certain question for Le Roy around representation and perception: questions he discussed in the interview and which he would address through working with games in *Project*. As with other artist interviews quoted in this thesis, Le Roy’s voice is presented on the right of the page:

**XLR:** *In general spectators don’t look for the rules of choreography but rather look for an extraordinary experience or physical exception or illusion (this is of course a bit too general and too quick). So to bring an idea of games in a theatre and work on choreography about this has certainly to do with question about aesthetics of perception. But my goal is not to represent games or the aesthetics of games. Actually I think this relates to a question I have about the role of recognition in the process of perception. I am interested in the fact that if for the spectators something is represented that’s because he or she recognises something or constructs a recognition. At the same time as spectators we are also seeking for something new. So that’s a paradox or impossibility...*

*What interests me in using games is to trigger these different kinds of perception, the one looking for the rules to understand or using the rules to enjoy the dramaturgy and the one where you actually make your own rules. My wish is to set up a situation where actually the performers as well as the spectators come and go between these two activities. That's what I wish the piece "project" will become.*

(Le Roy in Hantelmann & Le Roy, 2003: unpaginated)

When Le Roy notes that: “if for the spectators something is represented that’s because he or she recognises something or constructs a recognition” alongside his interest in approaches that “trigger different kinds of perception” (Le Roy in Hantelmann & Le Roy, X. 2003: unpaginated) he iterates the concerns of this research into *non-representational poetics* and its orientation towards modes of operating other-than through recognition. Since games in themselves are not representationalist operations, they perhaps do not invite metaphorical readings. Working with game-like structures, gave an opportunity to set up and investigate situations in which the perception of not only the spectator, but also that of the performer, might orientate in modes other than towards recognizing.

Le Roy’s concerns indicate towards the ‘how’ of constructing. Differing from Lehmen’s *Schreibstück* and its pre-written structure that produces through the agency of its component parts, Le Roy’s project examined the *processes* of producing choreographic structures. Rather than working with a pre-established structure or with fixed roles, Le Roy sought to set up situations in which structures for working would be collectively con-structed. With *E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S.* Le Roy organized a set of conditions for researching, in Stengers’ terms, “situations for thinking and not recognizing” (Stengers, 2005).

Four years into this research Le Roy and his collaborators<sup>54</sup> began to create the performance piece *Project*.

### **Three scores relating to the performance of *Project***

The published scores are *3 Games Game*, *The Descriptive Score*, *The Dramaturgy of The Performance Event* and *The General Rules Score* (Le Roy, 2010: 102-115). Each has been written retrospectively; each can be read as a document of past processes as well as a set of instructions that can be carried out in the present or future. The three scores relating to the performance *Project* are introduced below through my reading of them.

*3 Games Game* is a set of instructions for three games, Football, Handball and Corners. As well as written instructions for how to play, the score includes diagrams that depict spatial positioning for the games and size requirement of the space. Each game involves two teams of four players. The three games of the *3 Games Game* score are played at the same time and in the same space. There are eight players in total. These eight players function as six teams each of four players. This means that each player is part of three different teams, playing three different games, simultaneously. Combinations of clothing such as hat or no hat, and yellow or pink T-shirt, designate which combinations of teams each player belongs with. Six additional players watch. Each of these can replace any player at any time. This will involve the player who is replaced giving their T shirt and hat to the player who takes her place.

All three games are based on the conventions of team games in which a team works together, and in opposition to another team, to achieve a pre-

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<sup>54</sup> The following artists were part of the development process for the *3 Games Game* first presenting it in 2002: Alice Chacaut, Amaia Urra, Anna Koch, Carlos Pez Gonzales, Cuqui Jerez, Frédéric Segurette, Juan Dominguez, Mart Kangro, Mårten Spångberg, Raido Mägi, Raquel Ponce, Tino Sigal, Paul Gazzola, Suzanne Berggren, Xavier Le Roy. In 2003 they were joined by Christine de Smedt, Geoffrey Garrison, Ion Muduante, Kobe Matthys, Nadia Cusimano and Pirkko Huseman to develop *Project* (Le Roy, 2010: 102).

determined aim such as to score a goal. Following the conventions of games, movement content as such is not written into the instructions, although restrictions on possible movement are given: for example in Handball “the ball can only travel in space by being thrown from player to player” (Le Roy, 2010: 103). The rules function to harness attention and to constrain action. Movement is consequent on the combination of aim (to win) and imposed restrictions. A particular difficulty that is present for each player is the multiple foci of playing three games simultaneously.

*The Descriptive Score* describes the set up for the performance event and the temporal progression through it. In the performance event the *3 Games Game* (as introduced on page 116) is presented in a linear sequence of repetition and variation. The variations include each game being presented individually; *3 Games Game* with music; *3 Games Game* in costume; the presentation of a one-minute choreographed section of *3 Games Game* developed through an earlier playing and video recording. For this latter variation each player has to have learned all eight parts of the pre-recorded one-minute of play. This is because (as also noted on page 116) any player can be replaced at any time. Each must be ready to play any role.

Variations on the *3 Games Game* come one after another. There is a co-existing logic of game rules and choreographic rules, of address to audience, of letting audience see the rules and playfully re-presenting the games. Although there is a choreographic presentation of repetition and variation, the performance nonetheless requires an *actual* playing in which at each moment the movement that arises is consequent on the game itself.

Another score is *The Dramaturgy of The Performance Event*. This gives an account of the temporal organization of *The Descriptive Score* including the use of light and sound. Importantly however, the instructions do not state that it is

the *3 Games Game of Project* that should be worked with. Any three (or more) games can be used. What this score highlights is a temporal structure, particular to *Project*, that could be worked with using other games to generate a quite different rendition of *Project*.

Le Roy's approach in *Project* differs from Lehmen's structural approach in *Schreibstück*. As noted in chapter three, Lehmen's components, the three independent versions of the score, are fixed in that they operate *alongside* other components, with no relation *between* them (page 84). In contrast, in *Project* the components intermingle and 'produce' the game through a different kind of relational event. If we think of the teams in *3 Games Game* as components, we can see that these components are not self-contained. Each team is made of players who are simultaneously part of two other teams playing two others games. In addition, at any moment a player who is 'off' can come on to replace an existing player. What constitutes a particular team-as-component has no fixed boundary; it is always in flux. A consequence of this flux and the simultaneous play of three games is, I suggest, a greater level of uncertainty for the performers/players and a need for them to be hyper alert to what is happening in the immediate moment. 'Thinking' operates in this immediacy, is constrained by the structural operations in a what-is-happening-now that will always, in each performance of the work, be a different happening. This, I suggest, creates conditions in which there is limited recourse to recognition and in which thinking orientates in a *non-representational* mode.

The above argument is consequent on my reading the scores. It draws on my knowledge as a choreographer and performer in sensing into the processes that the scores, as records, 'house' (a notion that was introduced on page 30). The fourth score has been investigated through practice.



### Investigating *The General Rules Score* through practice

*The General Rules Score* is a set of indicators for a process with others. Written retrospectively it 'remembers' the processes undertaken during *E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S* and the development of *Project* that led to the performance *Project* and to the scores described above.

#### *The General Rules Score for Project*

For a group of "performers" (between 12 and 20)

Set up rules to create games generating situations that become choreographies.

The games are played in order to produce movements.

The games are played to produce different kinds of relationships between the participants (and between participants and spectators).

The games allow as much as possible the participants to exchange roles.

During the performance of the situations made out of games there are always some having the role of spectators, other are performers

The games should allow different ways of performing: marking the actions, over acting, the task oriented execution, expressive performance, abstract dance, etc...

It is more about using rules than respect or transgress them.

There is a constant state of negotiation with the agreements, the situations, the games, the others, during the process and the presentation of the work.

The decision making about "how and what a situation should be" should be taken as late as possible. (This requires as much preparation as spontaneity).

The situation should produce continuous agreements and disagreements during the process and during the execution of the piece.

The group doesn't look for 1 general agreement but for a cohabitation of diverse agreements, which can disagree one with another.

The performers decide for themselves the tactic and strategy they want to perform during the choreography and games or for some specific parts of it. As well they also set up and agree on some commune strategies and tactics to be used for the games and with others before and during the choreography.

The work is processed as much as possible in a theatre situation.

The work is processed as much as possible with the presence of an audience.

The process is a mixture of actions and long discussions.

The work aims to become a choreography to be presented in a theatre.

(Le Roy, 2010: 106, formatting added)

Le Roy's *General Rules Score* is a score for movement generation; it is also a score for a social process. It functions to create a context for people to work together to negotiate the rules of the score. In so doing they will develop new games: games that will have their own rules. There is no invitation to 'imagine' a piece, as was the case with Lehmen's *Schreibstück* (discussed on page 71). This score invites, or perhaps demands, activation for it to be perceived. This text functions as instructions for (another) process. It orientates towards *processes* of constructing new games and new rules for a performance event. *How* this might arise is not defined in a formal sense or in terms of roles. It is the accumulation of these aspects of the score that leads me to work with it as part of the inquiry into conditions for a *non-representational poetics* of choreography.

In April 2012, I led the research workshop 'towards a reactivation of re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*.' The intention was neither to re-create, nor to re-enact the work that Le Roy showed, but to work with *The General Rules Score* to construct new games and new rules for a performance event.



**Image 15:** Video still from public sharing of games created during the research workshop 'towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' at Siobhan Davies Studios, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012

It's 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012, day one. We meet for the first time, myself and seventeen artists who have responded to an open call for participant collaborators.<sup>55</sup> I have mapped out some games, adaptations of theatre games: games to warm up, to sense each other, to get to know each other, to start making decisions. We walk through each other maintaining equidistance from each other, maintaining a particular speed, incrementally increasing speed, stretching and contracting the spaces between. As small as possible without touching. If you touch you freeze. If someone freezes all freeze. Someone will begin again. Walk again when 'someone' starts. Go in the quality of that person. Then a game to force a decision about who begins: e.g. if you can speak more than two languages; if you are wearing socks. I pass this out to the group and hear: "If you had a cup of tea when you got up this morning" and later: "If you were late this morning." Laughter. A getting to know each other and a getting a sense of each other.

Already activated here is the honing of an environment for working together, a particular kind of 'producing' of conditions in which the 'sense' of each other relates to a kind of making sense in the shared activities and also relates to the physical sense of perceiving other bodies, moving with those bodies. The understanding of these two senses operating in those activities was not evident to me at that time, which causes a little jolt in my writing now.

***So maybe you already contaminated the process with your own agenda, even though you were not aware of it. What do you think of that?***

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<sup>55</sup> Participant collaborators were Stella Dimitrakopoulou, Kayla Dougan Bowtell, Chris Dugrenier, Antje Hildebrand, Ella Hurman, Adam James, Justyna Janiszewska, Michael Johnson, Samantha Kettle, Evangelia Kolyra, Helen MacPhee, Anastasia Papaeleftheriadou, Jindeok Park, Soyoung Park, Beatrice Perini, Clarissa Sacchelli, Georgia Tegou.

*That's a thought! Well, it's not a scientific experiment in the sense of trying to set up repeatable controls that can be re-tested to 'prove' a hypothesis. It's an artistic investigation, and one that does have a very specific research focus. The warm up was a set of activities that were not evidently in Le Roy's 'General Rules Score', but perhaps they were less evidently there in that Le Roy's rules indicate towards working with choreographic modes as well as game rules. Warming up together in a way that wakes up and warms the individual and that warms a group sense – in the double meaning of physical sensing 'as' a group and also something like a group understanding of what is happening - can be understood as a choreographic mode of working I guess. We continued to do these daily group warm ups. This was agreed by everyone to be desirable. I didn't always lead. At the time I felt that there was a kind of common-sense – a kind of feeling sense in common - that through focusing together in this way, a certain energy is created in the group that facilitates working together.*

(Irvine, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013)

While the kind of warm up undertaken is a regular approach to practice in much western contemporary dance and theatre contexts, in this research, the warming up together in the ways described can be understood as a honing of conditions that acknowledge the milieu in the double sense suggested by the French origin of the word “mi 'mid' + lieu 'place'” (Oxford Dictionary, 2013c). In these practices “place” can be understood as one’s own body and the wider situation of being with others; “mid” can be understood as beginning right here right now in the midst, not from a place of retreat, but in an already going on.

Erin Manning (who was previously introduced in chapter two, pages 62-63) suggests that “a body is not separate from its milieu” and that “the milieu cannot be understood in spatial terms. It is an affective attunement more than a space, a field more than a form” (Manning, 2013: 26). A concern with this qualitative understanding of milieu extends through the practices of the research; milieu is a term that is used in *Perception Frames* and is discussed on pages 164-165. In the activities described there is a honing of perception an augmenting of the sensorial in which there is an orientation of perception towards a present sensing with others, rather than towards seeking what is to oneself familiar or recognizable. In this regard the warm up activities share Le Roy’s concern, identified on page 114, towards the “role of recognition in the process of perception” (L. Roy in Hantelmann, & Le Roy, 2003: unpaginated).

### **Processes and decisions**

The four-day research workshop involved a continual referring to *The General Rules Score*, extended discussions, the inventing of rules for games and negotiations about the meaning and function of rules and of games. In small groups and in larger groups we created games, watched each other’s games, negotiated and changed rules, distinguished between a rule and a task and reflected on the arbitrariness of the first action that sets a game in motion. The ongoing negotiations around how a rule functions, in part derived from our understanding of games, moved the process of decision-making towards a kind of logic, or logics, that included notions of consequences, fairness, imposition of penalties, questions of strategies and a non-arbitrariness. Discussions around choreographic modes of working with rules led to considerations about spatial organization, audience relations and timing - such as use of slow motion. These considerations became aspects of an accumulating logic of the choreographic-game rules we were inventing.

On the fourth day we shared five games with a public.

***What did the workshop bring forward?***

*What was really interesting to me, and consequent I think on the quality of social relations that the score engendered, was each performer's sense of authorship of/in the work. People shared the sense that the games were made together with no one person making directorial decisions. I think this was because of the extended negotiations in which games and rules kept being modified through testing and talking, but more so through the way that a sense of internal logic to the game-like activities became a gauge for contouring a rule.*

(Irvine, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012)

The reflections identified in this part of the self-interview, which was carried out soon after the workshop, highlights the process of decisions forming in working with *The General Rules Score*. In the making process, the social aspects of working together had generated a quality of thinking that produced a set of agreements not through comprise but through an emergent logic in/of the situation, here associated with games and rules. This differs from the logic of incrementally increasing material relations that emerged in *what remains and is to come*, which was discussed in chapter four pages 104-105. The logic operating in the research workshop was a logic of game-making, of rules that could 'work' to move the/a game forward, that were concerned with playfully setting 'goals' and setting difficulties in achieving the goals through rules that made 'sense' in a 'game sense' and that generated a choreography (of sorts).

In this, participants' volition and opinion were over-ridden by the situation itself. The situation appealed to other forms of organization and of thinking; it appealed to a kind of emergent logic in the testing out of rules in practice with others, in which there operated a kind of measure that was to do with game-making as indicated above, and through which decision-making emerged. In this the individual experienced herself thinking *with others* in/for the situation. This was a constructing in relations: not through relational exchange but in the event of relations. It is the aspect of arising in relations, as was the case, in *what remains and is to come*, that is important for this research and that continues to be addressed in future chapters. This sense of impersonal emergent logic-to-the-situation was experienced in the making of the games. However, the performing of the games produced different kinds of experiences.

*When it came to showing the games that were made I had a sense that the competitive aspect of game play pulled the work in a way that was driven by the goal of winning. I found a different kind of possibility when the competitive element of the game was less to the fore. It happened in a few of the games where the performers were caught in a situation in which they were more evidently thinking in the moment, when they were caught in a process of present sensing. I have gradually come to understand this as that the performers' working with perception is perceptible to me as a watcher, and more evident to them as performers. By contrast, when the competitive aspect was to the fore it tended to produce a thinking-in-the-moment that was more automatic or re-active.*

(Irvine, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012)

In the performing of the games that were made, different rules produced different kinds of behaviours. Automatic or reactive behaviour, at times accompanied by the laughter of self-awareness, was one. This was a very different quality of self-awareness from that produced by rules that 'caught people in a present sensing' as discussed in the self-interview above. This latter quality immersed the performer in the perceptibility of her actions, drawing out in her an augmented perceptual awareness.

### **Augmented perceptual awareness**

An augmented perceptual awareness in the performer was brought forward in the game 'No Way', a game with its own set of logics and stringent demands in terms of time and focus. This was a game in which two teams lined up across two edges of the space, and in which the task was to cross the space in a complicated manner that involved accurate counting, measuring of space covered and acting quickly if someone else made a mistake. A player's failure to notice another's mistake meant that she too had made a mistake. When a mistake happened the player had to return to the beginning. This was a game that insisted on duration, in which the competition was not between teams but between the rules and oneself, a game that took time, and with the taking of that time felt in duration by watcher and by performer/player. The performer was, and perceived herself to be, 'trapped' in action, in ongoing time, and in a present time of giving attention in the game. What the game and its rules produced was an augmented sense of awareness in the performer of her attention in action, a kind of suspension in perception, of time being stretched - suspended in an ongoing present thinking and perceiving - in an *act of thinking*. This immersion in perception would continue to be investigated in the course of the research and to become linked to questions of agency, autonomy and relations.



### **Agency, autonomy and relations**

On page 124 I discussed the sense of shared authorship that emerged in the making of the games through the way that decisions formed in the logic of the situation rather than through individual direction. This indicates that in the making stage that agency operated *in* relations: with each other and with the situation. This sense of shared authorship also gave to each performer a quality of autonomy within the process of performing. This was in part because there was no sense of a separate directorial position, invested in a particular person, who decided that this or that was right or wrong. In addition and more importantly, in performing games, there is a quality of autonomy that is always operative in game play, in as much as each player is individually responsible for her performance within the given constraints of the game. In the playing of the game, agency operates in the play itself so that, in performance terms, what is produced occurs through the combined relational and agential processes of the game.

A different quality of autonomy was also at times operative. Although not fully articulated in my understanding at this stage, autonomy for the performer was emerging as part of the conditions of a *non-representational poetics*, with that autonomy operating relationally and for the producing of the event. I noted on page 125 that when the competitive aspect of game play was to the fore it tended to produce a thinking-in-the-moment that was rather automatic or reactive a quality of thinking that is associated with recognition. This tended to be triggered by sense of achievement or failure to achieve the aim of the game. When perceptibility of perception was brought forward, such as with the performer 'trapped' in 'No Way', discussed on page 126, and when the performer resisted re-acting to the difficulty she was in, this other quality of autonomy operated. In this was the possibility for a staying in an immediacy of thinking-acting that did a producing through the performer's individual

heightened state of sustaining attention in the perceptual constraint. Questions of perception and autonomy are addressed further in chapters six and seven.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has reported and reflected on my examination of Xavier Le Roy's four scores for *Project*, scores that work with game play to generate a choreographic event. Following my reading of the three scores that are related to the performance of *Project - 3 Games Game*, *The Descriptive Score*, *The Dramaturgy of The Performance Event* - I have argued that the processes through which they operate produce the choreography through the agency of the performers/players *in* relations with each other. This is in part because, unlike in Lehmen's *Schreibstück*, there are no *fixed* components within the scores; each player/performer's allegiance to a particular team or game is constantly in flux. I have also argued that these scores have the capacity to hone a quality of thinking in the immediacy of the arising event, limiting recourse to recognition and orientating performer thinking in a *non-representational* register.

The fourth score, *The General Rules Score*, was examined through practical inquiry. This score, which lays out rules for the composing of games, forced a situation in which social process of decision-making arose collectively through a concern towards the logic of game. This logic functioned as a *modus* for thinking, to constrain thinking at an individual and collective level, without predetermining what was possible in the composing activities. I argue that this is a mode of thinking *in and for* the situation, a *non-representational* mode of composing in relations.

The key finding that is brought forward in this chapter is the importance of perception in the performing of a *non-representational poetics*. In the performing of the games that were composed through the activation of *The*

*General Rules Score*, I have noted that when the performer's perceptibility of her perception is enhanced that this can function to keep recognition and reaction at bay, and to maintain a quality of thinking in the immediacy and mutuality of thinking and action in the occurring event. The autonomy of the performer has been identified as an important aspect within this.

These insights around perception are brought forward further in the development of *Perception Frames* which is discussed in chapter seven. The following chapter considers how perceptual attention is embedded in the processes of Bock & Vincenzi's *Invisible Dances*.

## Chapter 6

### Embedding, perceiving and sensing in Bock & Vincenzi's *Invisible Dances*

#### Introduction

In this chapter I argue that Bock & Vincenzi's *Invisible Dances* (1999-2006) is constructed through an ongoing embedding of perceptual processes through time – and that it implicates the reader into those processes. My point of entry to the work has been poet Fiona Templeton's text in the book publication *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* (Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a). Templeton's text is a transcription of her spoken account of the performance of the same name that was presented at Arts Theatre, London on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2003 (Bock & Vincenzi 2004a: 7). This was a live event with nine performers at which Templeton was the sole audience member. Templeton had been charged with telling a future audience what it was that she was seeing. Templeton's voice would be their means of access to the work and became the content of the piece *Invisible Dances ... from afar: a soundwork for the telephone*. It was this soundwork piece that was programmed by Dance4 in their Nottedance Festival in 2003. Later, and unplanned at the time of the soundwork, Templeton's text was transcribed for the book publication.

Templeton's text differs from the other texts that are examined and presented as part of the thesis in that her text is not a score. It is presented in a book *of* a performance. Like the scores it operate through specific constraints; like the scores it is a record *of and for* processes. Templeton's attention is constrained by the processes that she is witness to and by the task that she is given: to record her seeing for a future unseeing audience. The text is itself a record of Templeton's partaking in these processes of witnessing and giving account. Furthermore, I suggest that Templeton's text can operate to constrain the attention of the reader, in ways that foreground the reader's perceptibility of

perception, so generating a sensing in the reader, of her own making-sense: an experience that was evoked in this reader. In this chapter I argue that this is a consequence of the mode of construction of *Invisible Dances*: a mode that constrains the attention of all parties to the work through the embedding of perceptual processes through time.

Templeton's experience as sole audience member tasked with recording for a distant and future audience what she is seeing, is itself part of that embedding process. I argue that Templeton's perceptual attention is constrained by the situation and by her task within it, forcing her into giving attention in a mutuality of sensing and acting (meaning here the activity of her speaking). Not only is Templeton constrained in this manner, so too are the performers she is watching. This giving attention in a mutuality of (heightened) sensing and availability in physical action, evoked through particular perceptual constraints, I have come to call perceptual sensing.

### **On perceptual sensing**

The term, perceptual sensing, is one that I began to use in the course of developing *Perception Frames* (discussed in chapter seven), and later to describe the kinds of processes that Bock & Vincenzi embed in the constructing of *Invisible Dances*. My unexamined use of this term – at the time of developing *Perception Frames* - was addressed in a self-interview:

***You are using the term perceptual sensing as a kind of shorthand for something specific. Can you say more about that?***

*The activities that I am investigating are to do with framing the sensual activity of perceiving – with augmenting in awareness the activity of perceiving in the*

*moment of that perceiving. In this, perceiving operates in relation to the sense modes such as seeing, hearing and touch. It's also to do with proprioception, to a bodily sensing and in relation to both internal and external stimuli. It's about working very keenly with our capacities to perceive. In this there are two things going on that are to do with sensing. One is the working with our sensing faculties – the activities of the differing modes of perception, which I've just described; and then also how what is perceived 'makes sense.'*

*By that I don't mean a narrative sense or a discursive sense but something like how sense perception produces the world(s) we inhabit. There is a kind of actuality to this. In the context of this choreographic inquiry it's to do with how the activity of perceiving generates actions that are productive of a choreographic event. I'm trying to squeeze this possibility of producing the choreographic through highly delineated constraints that operate through the sensing of ourselves as performers in the activity of perceiving, with the actions or decisions for action being generated in the activity of self-awareness to that perceiving. In this, actions such as movement or stillness, are generated in and by the particular constraints.*

(Irvine, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012)

This initial grappling with the processes and the means of their articulation in the form of language would continue. Implicit in this early explication of

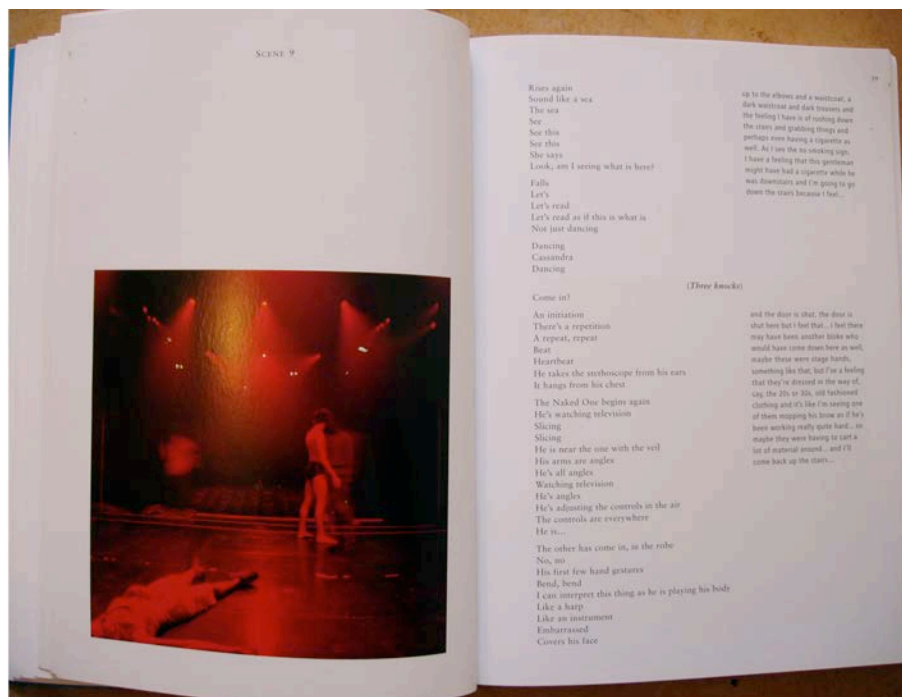
perceptual sensing, is the mutual activity of thought and action. This would become, in my understanding, a mode of thinking that is generated through constraints that frame a giving of attention in an immediacy of sensing and perceiving. It is conditions for this quality of thinking that *Perception Frames* seeks to harness, and which is discussed in the chapter that follows. This mode of thinking is, I suggest, present in *Invisible Dances*. In that work, Bock & Vincenzi compose situations that focus and constrain the attention of the various parties to the work in the mutual activity of thought and action, through the parties' immersion in particular perceptual sensing processes.

### **About *Invisible Dances* and the written work**

*Invisible Dances* began in 1999 with the explicit intent to spend an extended amount of time researching “outside the idea of making work for an audience” (Vincenzi, 2012: 205. Interview with author. See appendix 3). Concerned with “keeping with the thing of not knowing” the early frame for the research was “the idea of nothingness” (Vincenzi, 2012: 218. Interview with author. See appendix 3). The project extended over a total of seven years and 27 blocks of work (Bock & Vincenzi 2006a: 21-27) culminating in three Acts, *Prelude*, *L’Altrove* and *Here As If They Hadn’t Been, As if They Are Not* which were presented between 2004 and 2006. The project was supported by Dance4 at various stages, through residencies and performance showings including the performance of Act 111 of *Invisible Dances: Here, As If They Hadn’t Been, As If They Are Not* in Nottedance 2006 and *Invisible Dances ... from afar: a soundwork* for the telephone at Nottedance 2003. This soundwork, as noted earlier, was Templeton’s voice giving her recorded moment-by-moment account of the performance of *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* - and was later transcribed for the book.

At that performance, which would never be shown, the sole audience member, “*The Watcher*” Fiona Templeton, spoke from her seated position in the

auditorium of what she was seeing. Others were in attendance. The descriptions that follow are from Bock & Vincenzi (2004a: 7). There was a “*Medium*” James Brown invited to sense if there were “spirit audiences in the theatre building” during the performance. Unlike Templeton, who had to remain seated throughout the show, Brown could move freely within the auditorium and stage area. Templeton’s and Brown’s accounts were recorded live. There was a “*Witness*”, Rose English, situated outside the auditorium on the stairs to the dressing room, unable to see the show but able to hear. Her task was to write about this. A photographer, Henrik Thorup Knudsen was present; his open shutter camera, positioned upstage, captured images of the event. The work lasts for two hours; there are nine performers; there are two acts each with eighteen scenes; each scene lasts three minutes and twenty seconds; there is one three minute interval between the two acts. The book is structured like the show with the Acts presented sequentially, and each scene beginning on a new page. The transcribed texts from “*The Watcher*” and the “*Medium*” share the page, presented in two columns, offering contrasting experiences of the same scene.



**Image 16:** Pages 38 & 39 from Bock & Vincenzi's *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* (2004a). Image by Henrik Thorup Knudsen.



A single image appears on most, but not all, double page spreads. Empty space occupies the page along with text and image. Several shorter texts by the “*Witness*” are interspersed through the book. For this thesis it is Templeton’s role of “describing for an absent audience her experience of watching a show that no-one would ever see” (Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a: 7) that is of particular relevance, since it addresses an actuality of noticing what is happening.<sup>56</sup>

The book is a document of an actual event that occurred at a particular point in the past, its texts and images, produced and captured during that past event. As such the book may be understood as an archive, a record. Encountering *Invisible Dances* through this book my experience is not simply one of engaging with a record of a past event, although it is that too. In reading Templeton’s attempt to tell people “what [is] happening” (Templeton, 2013: 227. Interview with author. See appendix 4) and her attempt “to stick with what am I looking at and how am I doing my job of looking at it and talking about it” (Templeton, 2013: 227. Interview with author. See appendix 4), I sense the aliveness of the voice that is transcribed, the actuality of the event that is described and the questing of the voice to make sense. As reader I too find myself trying to make sense, in sensing what it is that “*The Watcher*” is sensing/saying:

One is moving, looking at the back

Naked with trunks and mask

Black

Cut in half and headless

He is

Slicing with his hands

He is fingering, flick, flickering

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<sup>56</sup> The invitation to Brown as “*Medium*” to “see if there was any other spirit audience in the theatre” (Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a: 7) is outside the scope of this thesis, since the suggestion that there *may* be a spirit audience invites a mode of thinking that is in the terrain of pre-supposition. I do not mean here that it is not possible that there could be a spirit audience. However the question of that possibility is beyond the scope of the research.

Flick, flickering with his hands

Like feathers

Like birds at him

He's facing the front

His body faces

Back, side back, back, back

(Templeton in Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a: 21

formatting in original)

While this *is* a record, the conditions in which the record(ing) was made, I suggest, are such that they force the immediacy of the event being watched into the moment of its being recorded. I read a present tense articulation of the actions of the "One" who is watched. I read the voice of "*The Watcher*" whose attention is moving, alighting on action, position, repetition - moving from one description, another, another, offering her seeing, her perceiving to me, her future audience, who finds herself in another time of present-sensing what it is that is happening in that-then present-past time.

The temporal relay of processes that is suggested in my experience of reading can be traced throughout the project. Perceptual processes are embedded through the mode of construction of the work implicating performers, Templeton and myself as reader into a tightly constrained attention to our own perceptual sensing. The following gives an account of the accumulating processes that became embedded in the show that Templeton was witness to, that became embedded in Templeton's text and that remain capable of activating perceptual sensing processes in future readers.

### **Embedding processes**

The project began in a lab for choreographers and composers when Bock & Vincenzi worked with composer Luke Stoneham. As mentioned above (page

133) Bock & Vincenzi were using the notion of “nothingness” to frame the research, although there was limited sense of meaning attached to this idea (Vincenzi, 2012: 218. Interview with author. See appendix 3).<sup>57</sup> Stoneham’s response to the “idea of nothingness” was to suggest working with sounds that only the performers could hear (Vincenzi, 2012: 218. Interview with author. See appendix 3). This became the starting point for *Invisible Dances*. At the beginning of the lab Stoneham was still preparing the tapes. It was as a consequence of this that Bock & Vincenzi began to work with the performers with eyes closed carrying out, over prolonged periods, exercises that heightened qualities of physical sensing and that drew performers’ attention towards interior bodily states as discussed here by Frank Bock. As with previous artist interviews, the artist’s voice is presented on the right of the page:

**FB:** *What does it mean to lose the room? What do we need to do to lose the room? What are the physical stages of losing the room? [...] How do we lose the room before we then find the interior space? [...] What are the stages of losing the room?*

*[And also] leading and being led ... or just becoming attuned to the idea of following. We did a huge amount of tasks around following, people trying to find ways of leading in as many kind of contact ways as possible, in the lightest of ways, to just somehow sensitize or attune everyone to the idea of when these mythical tapes did finally arrive we’d sort of find a relationship to following; a relationship to losing the room.*

(Bock, 2012: 215. Interview with author.

See appendix 2)

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<sup>57</sup> At the same time it acknowledged the limited practical resources they had available for the research (Vincenzi, 2012: 218. Interview with author. See appendix 3).

This was the beginning of *Invisible Dances*, a beginning in which the performers were immediately immersed in a set of processes that operate through qualities of listening and sensing, processes that are internally driven, with no goal in sight. I use 'in sight' here to indicate the lack of external form as a measure of what might be thought of as attainment with regard to the exercises. What might be capable of attainment here is a perceptual state that generates movement. The exercises function to quieten the operation of volition; they delineate specific intents for the dancers' attention, intents that orientate attention other-than towards pre-determined movement actions. In Bock's exercises 'thinking' is orientated in a mutuality of mindful attention and bodily sensing and in an immediacy of attuning in perceptual awareness.

It was in this primed state of perceptual awareness that the dancers were introduced to Stoneham's sounds tapes. The sounds were relayed through each dancer's personal headset. Dancers worked with the sounds and with the perception of falling into, or "being abandoned to [...] interior spaces in the body" - which led to one part of the project's repertoire: "the abandoned body material" (Bock, 2012: 208. Interview with author. See appendix 2).

In the research sharings (and later in the three Acts) particular performers could select tapes for other performers who were working with the "abandoned body" material, physically changing one tape for another during the show. The sound tracks on the tapes were organized in such a manner that the performers didn't know which track would play, or when a track would begin, or end (Bock, 2012: 208-209. Interview with author. See appendix 2). These random elements in the organization of the materials augmented the necessity for "abandoned body" performers to give close attention in listening, in both sound and non-sound, to be in a state of readiness towards something that they could not, or at least not in detail, know in advance. Through the various working and compositional processes, the performer's attention is primed in a readiness to

follow, but not to plan in advance. What is primed is perhaps a mode of thinking in perceptual sensing, an enhanced capacity towards being in an immediacy of movement arising in *acts of thinking*.

Another part of the repertoire developed through perceptual sensing processes was “street journeys” (Bock, 2012: 208. Interview with author. See appendix 2). During a residency at Dance4, artist Theo Cowley made video recordings of street journeys of strangers in the streets of Nottingham. Cowley notes that the work “in the studio which is about a certain unselfconsciousness, an internal journey [...] feeds the work I am doing outside” (Cowley, 2002: unpaginated). Cowley became “immersed” in following people, in a “stealth hunting” to select “subtle theatrical characters” whose behaviour was “unselfconscious” (Cowley, 2002: unpaginated). He articulates here a notion of “character” that is not about being someone else, rather it is perhaps a notion of being more fully in a present moment. The “character[‘s]” awareness of being filmed would risk breaking the unselfconscious quality. Cowley, with camera in hand, had to deal with trying to remain in some sense ‘invisible.’ In his journey of finding and following the “characters” Cowley also notes that “there are still the steps and gestures of the journeys, but they take care of themselves” (Cowley, T. 2002: unpaginated). Cowley’s processes are embedded in the moving frame of his video camera: his selection of the “unselfconscious”; his own movements, his “steps and gestures” of following and of remaining discrete. The video frames are later presented to the performers, for their differently “unselfconscious” responses.

The street journeys were played in performance on screens that were only visible to performers and who were instructed to do “everything” that was in the frame, every camera movement, to deal with the camera as if they were “in a visual storm”, dealing with “everything”, although it was never named what “everything” was Bock, 2012: 209. Interview with author. See appendix 2). An

unpredictable mode of organization, similar to that used with the sound scores for “abandoned body” material, was used with performers not knowing when they would be “set off” (Bock, 2012: 209. Interview with author. See appendix 2). Here, I suggest, the perceptual frame is such that performers are immersed in an overload of perceptual information. As with the “abandoned body” material, performers’ ‘thinking’ is orientated to/in the perceptual immersion, in an immediacy of thinking/acting. Movement arises that is consequent to that immersion yet unplanned within it.

Interdisciplinary scholar and artist Martha Fleming<sup>58</sup> suggests that *Invisible Dances* investigates the very conventions of dance. Unlike usual forms of dance, or what is generally understood as dance, it builds its repertoire other-than through gestures that are set (Fleming, 2004: 18-19).<sup>59</sup>

Certain gestures and acts which spring from the internal body physical research [...] are then repeated. [...] It’s a repertory that is born out of the involuntary gesture of a nerve, and not driven by a vocabulary that might be mimetic in some way. It’s born of gestures that come from individuals rather than gestures that are linked to the relating of a story. [In *Invisible Dances* there is a] mapping [of] the same voyage onto a variety of bodies: the same voyage with different timings, different bodies.

(Fleming, 2004: 18-19)

In this quote, Fleming identifies a range of factors that operate through a *non-representational* mode: the “involuntary gesture”; her “individual” and processes of what she calls “mapping.” Her “individual” is the performer who, I suggest, is not operating from a sense of identity as an individual subject, but as

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<sup>58</sup> Fleming’s work is wide-ranging. Her website states: “Martha Fleming has been working in the interdisciplinary nexus between the sciences, the humanities and the fine arts for several decades. She has forged innovative and productive methodological alignments across disciplines as a museum professional, academic and artist” (Fleming, no date).

<sup>59</sup> Fleming’s comments, although not published until 2004, derive from an interview carried out soon after the Dance4 residency in 2002. This was when Theo Cowley undertook his video journeys that then became the frame for dancers’ movements. Martha Fleming had been following *Invisible Dances* since its beginnings in 1999. She was commissioned by Bock & Vincenzi to carry out the interview with them during the 2002 residency.

a force of perceptual awareness operating through or in the individual body of the performer. In this the performer has agency to act in the moment: she is required to do so. Her agency is linked to a responsibility towards the larger event, one that she cannot see or know in its entirety. She cannot rest in the re-creation of a series of set gestures. She is compelled into a present sensing, into Fleming's "involuntary gesture" through a quality of unselfconsciousness in which a notion of identity does not cling to the individual agency she performs. The "mapping" that she performs, for example of Cowley's street journeys that are presented in the video frame, operate not through a mode of representing something that is already know, but through the framing of sense modalities towards the producing of movement in the each-always-different moment in her seeing/sensing of the video frame.

Fleming's "mapping" (Fleming, 2004: 9) is a feature of the way that the work is processually constructed. Processes build up one after another, one on top of another, each demanding in its being performed an attention in a present moment rather than towards forms of re-creating what is already known. This demands of the performer a giving-up of wilfulness with regard to what it is that she is doing, an aspect that was addressed by Frank Bock in his interview with me, when he talked about the "abandoned body material" and the unpredictability of being set off by the sound in the earphones:

**FB:** *Once it started you had no choice. So there was a sense that volition was taken out. Once the material began there wasn't the idea of choices... Of course perhaps you could argue that there's always some choices being made. We tried to take that out as much as possible. You just had to ... you were just taken ... you just had to follow that - whatever you were given.*

(Bock, 2012: 209. Interview with author.)

See appendix 2)

Bock repeats this lack of choice in talking about the “street journey” material:

**FB:** *In a way we just said you have no choice and you're not making any decisions. You have to do everything that's there. So you're almost trying to do something that's impossible. You're always faced with the impossibility of what you are doing. That's why it sometimes had a sense of being in a storm, of being just caught.*

(Bock, 2012: 210. Interview with author.

See appendix 2)

The processes that Bock & Vincenzi set up constrain the attention of the performers and at the same time are 'open' in that what the performer will do is not, cannot be, planned in advance. The performers are activators of processes; it is in the activation of those processes that the performers' thinking-sensing-actions are squeezed out and that the work is produced. The performers are thinking-sensing-producing agents.

### **Thinking-sensing-producing**

In chapter two I introduced, through Erin Manning and Brian Massumi (on pages 62-63), terms earlier introduced by process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead: presentational immediacy and causal efficacy. The particular constraining of thinking that Bock & Vincenzi compose is one in which presentational immediacy, the “qualitative, vitality affect aspect” (Massumi, 2008: 7) of experience is foregrounded in performers' awareness. Performers are saturated in the perception of their own perceiving. It is this, along with causal efficacy's capacity to draw on past experience and to “activate the how



of experience” (Manning, 2012: 55), that drives the dancers’ movements. Although drawing on a pastness, a knowing ‘how’ to move, this aspect I suggest ‘serves’ the qualitative aspect; it is the qualitative aspect that is foregrounded. It is the qualitative aspect that is ‘experienced’ as the producing aspect by the performers.

There is a distinction to be made here in terms of working with the pastness of what is known and working with presupposition understood as an intention towards what is already known. The former refers to the capacity to move that inheres (as embodied knowledge) in the performers’ bodies, the latter refers to an intentional orientation of thinking towards known movements. My suggestion is that the constraints Bock & Vincenzi compose maintain the immediacy of perceiving in the foreground such that there isn’t an orientation of thinking towards the familiar. The performers’ (technical) understanding in movement is part of the pastness that facilitates their capacity to remain in a state in which perceptual immediacy is foregrounded while moving. The performers are brought into an immersion in perceptual attention, into a kind of suspension in an immediacy of perceiving: a “being just caught” (as discussed above by Bock (page 141-142) in an experiencing of action arising. It is in the immediacy of thinking-sensing what is happening, in the situation of the composed constraint, that the choreography is produced.

It is this that Fiona Templeton is witness to, in a darkened theatre in which:

The present filled the place with its doing and disappearing, its constant replacements. Literally without time for reflection, I had to become the present mirror of that place-time. Seeing became speaking, first via thought, then speech itself, voice captive, breath rasping.

(Templeton in Bock & Vincenzi 2006a: 6)

Templeton too is forced into a quality of perceiving that demands a kind of immersion in the *immediacy* of perceiving. Templeton's capacity as writer and artist is, like the capacities of the performers' discussed above, a pastness that she brings to the task of witnessing the show.<sup>60</sup> Templeton has told me that:

*FT: I didn't know what the show was going to look like and Simon was quite careful not to let me know. And even though I had seen a rehearsal, the rehearsal wasn't the whole show and it certainly wasn't the time of the whole show. What I didn't know [was that] there wouldn't be a break or a cease in the action. Although there was an interval, things were still happening. I quite liked the way Simon ... in a way his whole approach to work is performative. Those facts that he didn't tell me. Everything was very deliberate. That was a directorial choice of his.*

(Templeton, 2013: 226. Interview with author.

See appendix 4)

Vincenzi's "directorial choice" is one that places Templeton in a situation in which she has limited pre-conceptions about what she will see, in which her seeing is made more difficult by the necessity she feels to keep on witnessing, to keep on speaking, over a prolonged time without interval, and in which she becomes, like the performers she is witnessing, "caught":

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<sup>60</sup> In works such as *The Medead* (premiered 2012) and *Cells of Release* (1995), Templeton had been "thinking a lot about the nature of text that was forced not to look back at itself and what kind of thinking that created" (Templeton, 2013: 226. Interview with author. See appendix 4) creative concerns that were resonant with the processual demands of the task framed by Bock & Vincenzi.

I'm caught in the  
 I'm in the describing  
 Of the enclosure  
 Describing  
 Covering the information  
 I'm reporting from afar  
 I'm the Witness  
 You're the witness  
 I'm the means of your witnessing  
 I'm witnessing your witnessing

(Templeton in Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a: 54  
 formatting in original)

Not only is Templeton “caught” in the seeing and sensing and speaking of what is happening in a present time, she is also present in an awareness towards a ‘to-come’ time of a future listening audience for whom she is their conduit, the means of their access to the show. The constraint that Templeton operates within is one that forces an immediacy of present sensing for a producing in language and for future others: a constraint in which Templeton experiences a “responsibility to the listener” (Templeton, 2013: 227. Interview with author. See appendix 4). A quality of care is evoked in the composed constraint that causes her ongoing speaking:

**FT:** *With ‘Invisible Dances’ I felt like I should keep speaking because I felt my voice was a line of connection. It is the nature of the telephone - if there is nobody speaking then the whole thing isn’t working. So that necessity to speak [...] even when there is nothing to say. I really experienced that.*

(Templeton, 2013: 228. Interview with author.)

See appendix 4)

Although Templeton had “[thought] through beforehand a very wide range of verbal strategies” that she could work with, the continuous act of talking over a prolonged period brought her to an exhaustion of her talking strategies and to “a kind of lallation” (Templeton, 2013: 227. Interview with author. See appendix 4). By scene 33 of the 36 scenes Templeton’s voice reveals her attempts at seeing/saying and the impossibility of those attempts. In the excerpt that follows I feel the force of her arrest in a present and impossible sensing, in the ongoingness of a present tense in her transcribed speech, the falling away of anything to say and the need also, borne of her responsibility, to continue to ‘say’:

She sways

He leans backwards

She droops

He droops

She rises

Staggers and falls

He sways

As if leaned on and rising and taking

As if saying

As if

As if what he’s saying

As if

This is like this

I’m giving you

Take this thing  
 I feel a thing  
 I feel a  
 A round  
 It has a shape  
 Lift  
 Take this  
 This is all I can give you  
 This is all I can give you

Are you hearing this?  
 Are you hearing what's been taken out of me?  
 It has taken me  
 Most of my telling

(Templeton in Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a: 111  
 formatting in original)

The text carries Templeton's regard towards the event before her to which she is (impossibly) witness, and a simultaneous, though different, regard towards her audience, the future listener and, at that time unknown to Templeton, the future reader. Templeton is performing a bearing witness for others. She is simultaneously the observer of her own bearing witness from within the event, a thinking-sensing-producing agent – now and for a future.

### **Agential-relations, time and thinking**

The construction of *Invisible Dances* builds through a processual layering of perceptual processes in which Templeton's present witnessing performs a kind of archiving for a future. Not only is *futurity* present in Templeton's *present* witnessing, so too is the *past* of Cowley's processes of making the videos journeys (discussed on page 139) in which the performers are *presently*

“caught.” Templeton’s recording does not aspire towards being an authoritative rendition of what has happened, but one that makes possible a future “witnessing” by others and in which they too become caught up, in their listening or in their reading, in a sensing of what is (was then) happening. The agency that is afforded to Templeton and to the performers demands of them an immediacy of being present *to* and *in* the event, and, in the case of Templeton, *for* a future. The perceptual processes that Bock & Vincenzi compose are operating constraints within which each individual party to the work is autonomous. The autonomy of each is *required* for the work’s unfolding; there is no external ‘right’ measure of the performer’s actions. While each is in some ways immersed in an ‘own’ world, that immersion is part of the embedding of processes through time that is itself an aspect of the relational dimension of the work. It is in this temporal embedding of processes that agency and relations operate together.

A concern towards performer autonomy was indicated by Vincenzi in my interview with him, when he spoke about performers ‘owning’ the work:

*SV: I think the way that Frank and I have always worked, and this goes back to working with Cosmo who was I think just six at the time. We wanted him in the first ‘Forest Dance’<sup>61</sup> to be an equal, to contribute equally to the rehearsal process. And we wanted to use his qualities, and to allow him space. That’s always just been important about how we have made work. It’s a democratic space. And I guess for me (and this might be because I’m on the outside), it became very clear in*

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<sup>61</sup> *Forest Dances* (1995-97) were earlier works by Bock & Vincenzi. In the first Frank Bock performed with the child Cosmo Macmullan, in the second he “was mirroring himself really - at his own age and [in the third] we worked with an older actor” (Vincenzi, 2012: 219. Interview with author. See appendix 3). The three works were *Forest Dance no.1 (Once Upon and Ever After)* (1995), *Forest Dance No.2* (1996) and *Forest Dance No.3* (1997) (Arts Admin no date, a).

*'Invisible Dances', that it's really important to me that everyone in that piece owns their work. You know the work has grown out of them, developed only because of their presence in the process.*

(Vincenzi, 2012: 221. Interview with author.

See appendix 3)

It is the performers' autonomous agential presence in the processes of perceptual immediacy that produces *Invisible Dances*. Through Cowley's video journeys, the dancers' "mapping" of earlier processes in a present sensing, through Templeton's witnessing with its testimony for others of what can hardly be seen, a series of processual agential-relations is embedded in the choreographic construction through time. The embedding continues when a present reading of the text implicates the reader into the perceptibility of those earlier perceptual processes as well as heightening the sense of her own perceptual engagement, such that she too becomes imbricated in its processual construction.

*Invisible Dances* is, for all parties to it, a situation that in Stengers' terms (as discussed on pages 57-58) "makes us think and not recognise" (Stengers, 2005: 185). This 'thinking' is made possible in the work through its mode of processual construction. In the book and soundwork pieces, process are embedded one by one in what follows: the videographer Cowley's processes are what the performers grapple with; the performers' processes are part of what the "Watcher" grapples with; the "Watcher [s]" processes are part of what the reader/listener grapples with. The videographer, performer, "Watcher" and reader/listener are each enveloped in a sensory world in which senses are constrained and in which the physical activity of operating in that constraint is tangible. All of this brings forward the immediacy of the event of perceiving rather than an orientation towards anticipating, presupposing or recognizing.

While this calls everyone's attention in a present perceptual sensing, it does not arrest into a fixed present time. It overflows into a what's to come, not through force of anticipation, but through the drive of the embedded processes of the processual construction that is *Invisible Dances*.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have argued that the processes that Bock & Vincenzi compose constrain the various parties to the work in an immersion in perceptual sensing. These processes are embedded in an ongoing manner in the construction of *Invisible Dances* such that that each new party to the work is constrained in her 'thinking' and action in part by those earlier processes. This immersion in perceptual sensing staves off modes of thinking that are associated with recognition and bring an enhanced sense of choreographic action arising unbidden, in the immediacy of what is being attended to. The choreography builds through the relational events of perceptual sensing in the midst of others' processes of perceptual sensing. The following chapter discusses *Perception Frames* - a collection of choreographic scores in which processual instructions are presented on the page as an invitation to produce in the event of perceptual sensing.



## Chapter 7

### Processual instructions for perceptual sensing in *Perception Frames*

#### Introduction

*Perception Frames* is a work that exists as a written textual object:

*Perception Frames* is a collection of choreographic scores for practice and performance. It is a workbook that can be used for ongoing dance practices; as a resource in teaching; as a toolkit for choreography and as scores for performance.<sup>62</sup>

(Irvine, 2014: 7)

It is one of the creative components of the thesis and is submitted with this written element. The reader is invited to refer to the written scores when reading this chapter. *Perception Frames*, like the works discussed in the previous three chapters of this thesis, operates through the activation of specific constrained and open relational processes. The particular processes that it operates through are perceptual sensing processes. The term perceptual sensing, which is concerned with an augmented perceptibility in the performer to the activity of her perceiving, was introduced in the previous chapter (pages 131-132), on Bock & Vincenzi's *Invisible Dances*. There I suggested that perceptual sensing processes that operate to constrain performers' attention are embedded in *Invisible Dances* through time. In *Perception Frames* perceptual sensing processes are presented as an invitation: as processes to be entered into and to be modified by each artist who works with them.

The scores in *Perception Frames* delineate certain constraints for entering into perceptual sensing processes. These processes operate through qualities of

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<sup>62</sup> It also states that "as well as being used for dance, many of the scores [...] can be worked with in other media such as drawing, music and writing" (Irvine, 2014: 7) indicating a concern with an expanded notion choreography that does not limit itself to dance practices. The drawing by Julie Brixey-Williams that is included on page 95 of *Perception Frames* was undertaken working with the practice frame *density and porousness* (Irvine, 2014: 35).

thinking that call on a mutuality of sensorial and mindful attention in each moment of working with the scores. The challenge that the frames propose to the performer is to work with an attentive mind and sensing body simultaneously, in an experiential non-separation of mind and body experiencing-action-occurring. The activity of perceptual sensing is orientated through a receptive mode of active awareness in and towards each particular, and always different, situation of working with the frames. Performer attention is constrained, harnessed, by the contours of the frames, in the immediacy of the event. This is a quality of 'thinking' a 'forcing' of thinking that is not recognizing. My suggestion is that the scores (have the capacity to) generate *acts of thinking* in choreographic practice. Foregrounding the qualitative aspect of experience, the scores orientate in an immediacy of perceptual attention, such that, in their activation, they engender a choreographic producing. In this way their operations are those of a *non-representational poetics*.

### **The written structure**

*Perception Frames* contains general instructions, groups of scores, notes for working with each of these and a glossary. The general instructions lay out *how* to approach the scores. They assert the conceptual concerns in a simple and direct manner that is intended to make them accessible in a practical way. The glossary explicates the terms used in the scores, insisting on the dynamic quality of each. In so doing, it operates as both explanation and processual instruction for working. The scores, presented as four sets of activities, are:

initial practices

practice frames

the extended score *Availability*

and the extended score *Tendings*.

The initial practices facilitate practitioners' experiential entry into processes of perceptual sensing. They hone a capacity to allow action to arise in sensing and

perceiving, rather than through force of volition or habit - so facilitating entry to the conceptual and the perceptual terrain. The quality of working that is cultivated through working with them is then embedded in the approach to working with the scores that follow. Initial practice A *doing what the body wants* is shown here with annotations identifying the purpose of the various elements of the score:



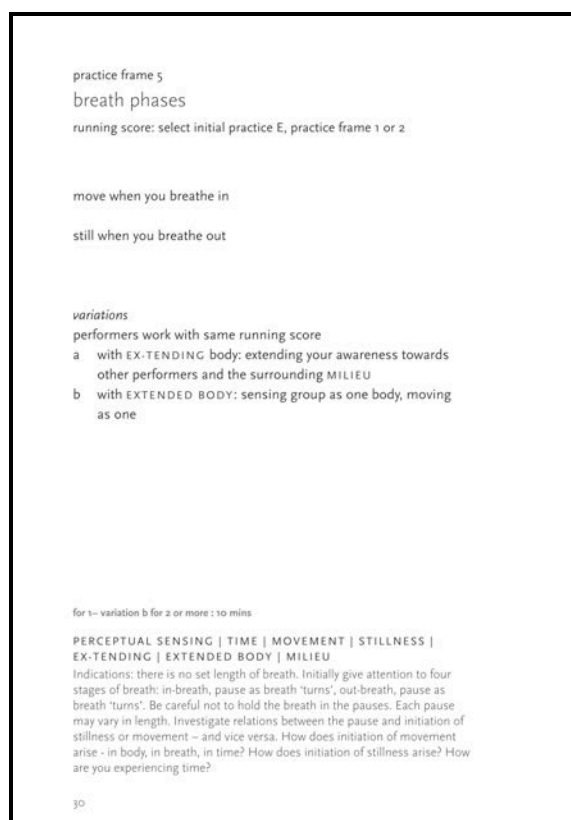
**Image 17:** initial practice A - *doing what the body wants* with annotations

Following the initial practices are eighteen practice frames. These mini-scores, which use the same layout on the page as the initial practices, can be used as exercises and as choreographic resources. The practice frames are presented on the pages of *Perception Frames* in a chronology of extending attention. They range from the giving of attention toward one's own movement, to including another mover, to the whole group and to the wider milieu.

Milieu, as introduced in chapter five (page 123) is understood in qualitative terms: it is an "affective attunement" that is not reducible to the spatial aspect of surroundings; it is "a field more than a form" (Manning, 2013: 26). For the

practitioner, giving attention to milieu involves the sensing of her body as not separate from its surroundings. The giving of attention towards one's own movement, with another mover, with the whole group and as part of the wider milieu is an ongoing extending of attention, an extending of capacity to be part of a situation that is greater than oneself, a being-in-relations-as-part-of the situation.

A structural feature of the work is that an earlier frames may be used as a 'running score' and become embedded in a later practice frames, as in practice frame 5, *breath phases*, as shown in the image below:



**Image 18:** practice frame 5 *breath phases*.

The earlier frames from which a 'running scores' should be selected are shown under the title. Performers work with the selected 'running score' and with the instructions in this frame.

Here there is a layering of two aspects within one situation: the attention in movement initiation and continuation, as framed by the 'running score', and a simultaneous attention on breath. Layering of modes of giving attention is

worked with in other scores of *Perception Frames*. Changing and accumulating situations of giving attention are present in the two extended scores:

*Availability* and *Tendings*.

*Availability* is an extended score for practice and performance. It works directly with an ongoing extending of perceptual sensing through seven phases of giving attention, such that there is an ongoing embedding and accumulating of processes operating. Each phase of the score identifies, on lower left of page, the practice frames that can support it, and which may be worked with prior to working with *Availability*. The following two images show phases one and seven respectively:



**Image 19:** Phase one of the *Availability* score: movement



**Image 20:** Phase seven of the *Availability* score: in-tending

The top left hand corner of image 20 identifies the phases that have accumulated through the score: ‘movement, stillness, ex-tending, spatializing, temporalizing, seeing and being seen’ - and to which the present ‘in-tending’ of phase seven is added. Each of these terms is identified in the glossary to which the reader is invited to refer. Two examples from the glossary follow:

#### EX-TENDING

the capacity of the body to sense beyond its own boundaries and with the surrounding MILIEU. PERCEPTUAL SENSING may be orientated towards other performers and towards other aspects of the environment - as well as being orientated in relation to your own BODY.

[...]

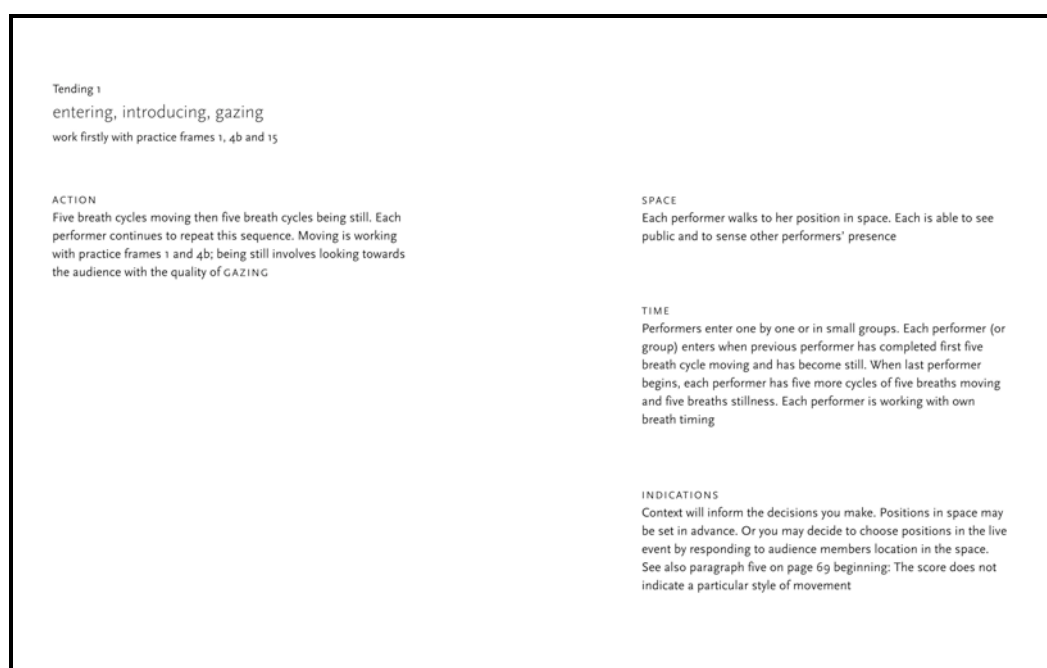
#### SPACE SPATIAL SPATIALIZING

in Perception Frames space is understood as dynamic; space is experienced in the event of its configuring. This is different from a fixed understanding of contained, static space. In attending to the spatial, attention is orientated simultaneously to internal and external sensing, to tiny orientations in one’s own body and with the surrounding. See also MILIEU, DIRECTION and SURFACE.

(Irvine, 2014: 90-91)

It can be seen that the glossary functions as an element of the processual instructions for the scores in the way that it gives indications for *how* attention is given. The glossary also evidences the theoretical concerns that operate *in* the work, with the examples given highlighting an occurring experiencing rather than a pre-defined notion of determinate possibilities.

The other extended score, *Tendings*, is a propositional score for performance. It works with individual practice frames, layering these and giving further instructions for performance. There are seven sequential Tending frames. The following image shows Tending 1:



**Image 21:** Tending 1: entering, introducing, gazing of the extended score *Tendings*

In the extended *Tendings* score there is a very particular embedding of processes since it is, in a sense, an orchestration of practice frames. There is a greater level of specificity here in terms of action and processes.

Choreographers and performers working with *Tendings* are required to make adjustments to the instructions that take account of the particular context of each performance. It is important in making these adjustments, that ways of

staying in perceptual sensing are identified, so that movement arises from a qualitative immersion in the immediacy of perception and not from 'obeying', in an automatic way, the instruction for actions.

*Perception Frames* is structured as a network of relations with practice frames and glossary terms working across the two extended scores *Availability* and *Tendings*. The various instructions, indications and glossary terms highlight the processual nature of the work, and that there is no pre-existing right outcome to strive for. It proposes particular combinations of open, indeterminate possibilities and constrained operational methods. These aspects are also present in the two other scores discussed in this thesis, Lehmen's *Schreibstück* and Xavier Le Roy's *General Rules Score* for 'Project', which are discussed in chapters three and five respectively. *Perception Frames* has other similarities and particular differences to Lehmen's *Schreibstück* and to Xavier Le Roy's *General Rules Score* for 'Project'.

### **Some similarities to and differences from Thomas Lehmen's *Schreibstück* and Xavier Le Roy's *General Rules Score* for 'Project'**

Like Lehmen's *Schreibstück*, *Perception Frames* is a record of a specific authorial intent; it exists in potential for activation; it is capable of producing a choreographic performance event; it delineates processes that others activate in the producing of such an event. As well as these similarities there are differences of authorial intent and structural differences between the two works.

The difference in authorial intent is identifiable in the manner of processual constraint that each proposes. Lehmen's intent is that choreographers can interpret the instruction in their own manner, and in so doing prepare a choreography of predominantly pre-planned actions, that are then carried out in the performance event. The intent in *Perception Frames* is that interpretative



modes of thinking are disavailed and that processes of 'thinking' are brought into an immediacy of sensing and perceiving in the performance moment. It is in this 'immediacy' that the choreographic event emerges, distinct from in the performing of pre-planned actions. Structural differences include that *Schreibstück* is a highly defined and linear spatial-temporal score with independent components, while *Perception Frames* is a collection of scores organized in a network of relations with limited spatial-temporal delineation.

The various scores in *Perception Frames* give instructions that are, like Xavier Le Roy's *General Rules Score* discussed in chapter four, not instructions for actions but instructions for entering into processes *for* producing. In this way the two works can be understood as having a particular shared authorial intent. What is produced through this shared attribute is quite different, as are the qualities of attention in which the performers are engaged.

In the case of Le Roy's *General Rules Score*, what is produced, initially, is rules and games. In the performing of these - that is in the activation of the rules and games - there is a playing of games *as* a choreographic event. Within this, performer's attention is contoured by the particular rules and games, including towards the goal of winning.

In *Perception Frames* what is produced through working with the process is initially strategies and clarifications of ways of working to retain the capacity to stay in processes of perceptual sensing. In the performing of the scores, the performer's attention is harnessed in an immediacy of sensing, perceiving and arising action with this occurring *as* a choreographic event.

With regard to the other creative component of this thesis, *what remains and is to come*, shared features include that both are concerned with processes that are specifically constrained and that in their activation produce the

choreographic event (as noted on page 17). A more particular similarity in terms of processes can be identified at this stage in this writing, to do with a concern towards qualities of giving attention and modes of working with the breath.

**Attention and breath in *what remains and is to come* and *Perception Frames***

In *what remains and is to come*, a mode of attending *in* what is happening while working with materials (discussed on pages 100-106) emerged as a kind of guiding principle in the development stage and contributed to an understanding of intra-relational events occurring with materials rather than the imposing of human desires onto materials. In the performing of *what remains and is to come* attention is orientated, for the most part, in a work-like way in the activation of the stages of intra-relational processes that were identified through that earlier mode of attending. A different quality of performer attention is enacted in the performance of *what remains and is to come* in the body-breath score (see image 6 on page 89) and in the moment of lying on the charcoal covered paper, seeing and being seen (see image 13 on page 108). In each of these, the performer's perceptibility of the immediacy of the performance moment and the mutuality of mind-body attention as part of the wider situation is brought forward in experience. It is this quality of attention that is more fully developed in *Perception Frames*.<sup>63</sup>

In both *Perception Frames* and *what remains and is to come*, working with the breath is a particular way that attention is given. The performance *what remains and is to come* opens with the body-breath score, an activity that demands a precise attention in the physical act of audible breathing while

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<sup>63</sup> Laura Cull has discussed Allan Kaprow's "Activities" which were scored and enacted between late 1960s and 2001, suggesting that his approach "conceives of attention as a particular mode of observation in which ontological participation – or being part of the whole – might occur" (Cull, 2012: 155, emphasis in original). A concern towards being "part of the whole" is identified in working with *Perception Frames*, although rather than it being something that "might occur" giving attention as part-of the (whole) situation is framed as an intention in many of the scores – in particular where 'milieu' is identified in the instruction which is discussed in the section that follows (page 164-165).

following a composed timing for the breath and maintaining eye contact with audience (discussed on page 89). The attention of the performer is by necessity held in the actuality and complexity of this physical act(s), in the present moment of its occurring and in a perceptible (to her) unity of mind and body. *Perception Frames* includes scores that work with maintaining attention on the breath. See for example image 18 on page 154 of this chapter, which shows practice frame 5 *breath phases*. This score makes a perceptual demand on how attention is given in the moment, constraining attention in the perceptibility of the act of breathing in an experiential non-separation of mind and body, and, in the case of variation 'a' of this score, attention is also extended in the wider milieu. Milieu and 'seeing and being seen', in both *what remains and is to come* and in *Perception Frames*, are picked up again in the following section (page 163-165).

The various ways of giving attention with breath as discussed in this section generate modes of thinking that are *non-representational*. They variously constrain attention in the what-is-happening of a situation rather than in a what-is-already-know or a what-is-anticipated. Each highlights that giving attention is a *process*. In *Perception Frames* it is perceptual sensing processes that are worked with.

### **Perceptual sensing and performing perception**

*Perception Frames* works with the performer's perceptibility to/in her perception: her attention is in the immediacy of processes of perceptual sensing. It is the concern towards giving attention within perceptual constraints that is a distinguishing feature of *Perception Frames*. When first working with the frames, whether approached as practices or as performance scores,<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> When worked with as practice scores, such as in training practices, or in peer group shared practice context, the scores cultivate capacities for giving attention and for working in the immediacy of thought/action. Although I am distinguishes this context from a performance context, in which a public audience is present, there is a point to be made about the overarching similarity in terms of the activities that practitioners are engaged with in both

attention is orientated towards the question of *how* to give attention in a perceptual immediacy that will, and here the future tense operates to indicate a future that is unplanned, enable action to arise unbidden in the moment of performance. *Perception Frames* then might be thought as ‘performing’ perceptual sensing, a notion that might, in turn, call up dance scholar Freya Vass-Rhee’s “*perceptual performativity*” (Vass-Rhee, 2010, italics in original). Here I draw out a particular distinction between Vass-Rhee’s term and what I mean by perceptual sensing – in particular in the way that perceptual sensing encompasses (what I here identify as) a mind aspect of perception.

Vass-Rhee has coined the term “*perceptual performativity*” in her discussion of the work of choreographer William Forsythe.<sup>65</sup> Discussing Forsythe’s *Decreation* (2003), she identifies a translation between bodily movement and sound such that there is an auditory re-presenting of bodily action (Vass-Rhee, 2010: 392-393), in which performer attention is divided “across vocal and kinetic modes” (Vass-Rhee, 2010: 395). My use of the term perceptual sensing differs from this. It addresses ways in which performers can remain in an immediacy of perceptual engagement, that is productive of action that is neither a translation nor re-presenting of another mode of perception.

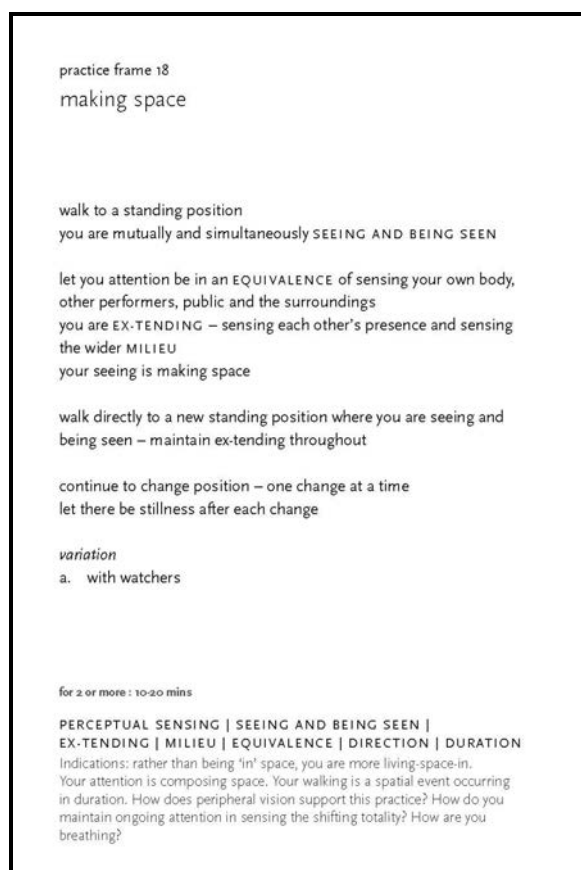
Perceptual sensing as I use it, refers to performers’ immersion in the activity of perceiving: in the affordance of perception, as in the proprioceptive capacity of the body moving, and in the sensing of that movement occurring. Furthermore, and this is where it particularly differs from Vass-Rhee’s “*perceptual*

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cases. Each context is effectively about cultivating the capacities just described. Each context is also about activating perceptual sensing processes. There is no ‘rehearsal’ or ‘marking’ of perceptual sensing. In each context of working with the scores, practitioners work ‘fully’ with perceptual sensing. In each context there is a choreographic event arising in the moment of giving attention in perceptual sensing.

<sup>65</sup> According to Vass-Rhee there is in Forsythe’s method of working a “continuous investigation of *perceptual performativity*: the capacity of the performance of perception to inform the ensemble’s movement research in practice as well as spectatorial experience of dance events [...] Forsythe directs attention within and across the senses [...] to direct attention to attention itself” (Vass-Rhee, 2010: 390).

*performativity*”, it includes an attunement in the milieu in which that sensing and movement (or stillness) is occurring - as well as a perceptibility in awareness to that movement (and stillness) functioning to generate the choreographic event. This can be thought of as mind aspect of perception, if for example we contrast this with the body aspects such as proprioception or sight. This is not to suggest a binary between mind and body. Rather I am suggesting that the mind aspect of perception is experienced in an augmented *perceptibility* of sensing oneself as part-of a world that is greater than one’s own body. Perceptual sensing operates, and importantly is perceptibly worked with and so experienced, in ways that extend beyond the body and the usual five sense modes. The following score highlights this mind aspect of perception:



**Image 22:** practice frame 18 *making space*

This score states: “you are mutually and simultaneously seeing and being seen” (Irvine, 2014: 44). In working with this, a quality of attention is called for that encompasses the sense perception mode of seeing and this mind aspect of

perception – an aspect that occurs in perceiving myself as able to be seen: as being-part-of a wider situation, one that encompasses perspectives that are more-than my own seeing. Further aspects of this score that build on (what I am here calling) the mind aspect of perception include that the performers, one at a time, change position and furthermore, that each maintains an extending of awareness in the wider milieu - the glossary definition for which follows:

#### MILIEU

comes from the French: mid (mi) and place (lieu). Both meanings operate simultaneously. You are in the midst of your own sensing and in the midst of 'place' understood as the wider surroundings. Architecture, physical structures, other performers, audience, passing public, movement, sound, etc – are all aspects of MILIEU. There is an ongoing process of attuning with and as part of those wider surroundings.

(Irvine, 2014: 89)

The performer carrying out the 'simple' action of changing position of stillness and standing is experiencing a highly dynamic environment in which Manning's "affective attunement", which has been discussed earlier in this chapter on page 153, is called into presentational immediacy and in ways that foregrounds the mind aspect of perception.

In chapter two (pages 62-63) I introduced, through Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, terms earlier introduced by process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead: presentational immediacy and causal efficacy. I discussed in chapter six (page 142-143) how Bock & Vincenzi compose constraints for performers' thinking that foreground - in performers' experience - presentational immediacy, the "qualitative, vitality affect aspect" (Massumi, 2008: 7). In that example the foregrounding of presentational immediacy drove the performers' movement. In the case of practice frame 18 *making space of Perception Frames* presentational immediacy is again foregrounded, but here there may be very little movement on the part of the performer.

The performer is extending her attention in a situation that is always changing even as she remains still. Every change, due for example to movement of other performers, of audience, of shifting light etc., is 'experienced' in her perceptual attention. At least that is the intent that she attempts to orientate in. In her stillness and in her occasional shifts of position, while she maintains perceptibility in the physical bodily aspects of her perception, her attunement as part-of the wider situation is what creates the choreographic event.

Giving attention in seeing and being seen was previously addressed in the discussion on *what remains and is to come* (page 108-109) in the context of working with materials and issues of female nudity and representation. In the seeing and being seen of that work, a perceptible awareness of one's mutual subject and object presence in processes of material intra-relations was experienced. In that a perceptual mutuality of body and mind attention was noted. The mind aspect in perception also came forward in the earlier research workshop 'towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' when it was identified as an augmented awareness to the perceptibility of perception as discussed in chapter five (pages 125-126).

It was following that earlier research activity that I undertook a series of research workshops investigating the augmenting and framing of perception. These, along with my own studio based practice, would lead to the ways of working with perceptual sensing as introduced above, and to the writing of *Perception Frames*.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> The following artists contributed to the development of the work through participation in workshops: Louise Ahl, Greta Heath, Dana MacPherson, Skye Reynolds, Stella Azzurra, Katrina Brown, Rebecca D'Andrea, Alicia Grace, Mark Leahy, Helen MacPhee, Emma Louvelle, Noel Perkins, Sara Reed, Ella Tighe, Julie Havelund, Keryn Ng Gek Theng, Anna Panzone; through sharing time and conversations with me in the studio in a one-to-one situation: Traci Kelly, Sioned Huws; through independently testing out the scores in their development: Jenny Hill, Vida Midgelow and Quick Shift members Sally Doughty, Miriam Keye, Eleanor Walker, Jill Cowley. This is in addition to those artists who participated in the research workshop 'toward a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' who are noted in footnote 55 page 121.

## **Investigations in augmenting and framing perception**

The first of these workshops was 'Perception Games' at The Work Room, Glasgow:

### ***How did Perception Games extend from the earlier research?***

*I was still thinking about rules and games and how these could work to bring forward the perceptibility of perception rather than automatic action/re-action. I wanted to work with people towards a common understanding or agreement around how we might set up a rule or game that was operating in that way, and that might not be about competitive game play. An overarching concern of the research is how to act and produce without pre-intent, without an expectation of what the thing that arises might be. This, I realised, can be quite a challenging concept ... It's about creative thinking and trying to stay in a space of creative thinking 'before' the creative thing is made or imagined ... and without the idea of a game for winning there was less to hold on to ...*

### ***So how did you work in the Perception Games workshop?***

*Initially I had thought that we might have some fairly complex set ups with layering sets of constraints demanding multiple sensory attention. This was quite challenging for some, I mean the question of what a rule*



*or constraint might be when it isn't attached to an intended outcome was challenging. And then to add onto that multiple ways of giving attention that didn't seem to have an external purpose ... was maybe a bit much ...*

*So I decided to work with one constraint or rule for attention at a time - and I tried to pull out those that enhanced awareness in perception rather than automatic behaviour.*

*And I introduced some of the scores I've been working with on my own, scores that disrupt habit: 'change when you recognize'; 'no symmetry'; 'never go back'.*

(Irvine, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012)

The scores that I introduced at that time function as rules for giving attention in the perceptual sensing of movement and stillness. Each is in its own way 'impossible.' Each forces a hyper awareness to the micro events of movement and of stillness: the initiation, the motivation, the decision forming in the body or in the intention and the observation of the event by the performer in its occurring. Amidst the frustration of the 'impossibility' of the score 'change when you recognize', I asked participants to notice, while working with the score, how they attempted to deal with it. Afterwards people reflected on what they noticed. These reflections were shared. Different ways of being in the score were identified in discussion as strategies, and as strategies that could be used by others. How, or if, those strategies facilitated staying in an immediate state of sensing and perceiving, without anticipating, was discussed. Discussion and reflection after the event and the development and sharing of strategies

was brought forward from here into later stages of the research.<sup>67</sup> While developing and sharing strategies had been a kind of break through in terms of participants access to the conceptual and perceptual terrain of the research, there was quite a different sense of ‘working together’ during this workshop from what had been experienced in the workshop ‘towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy’s *Project*’.

***Can you talk about your sense of shared authorship and authority in the Perception Games workshop?***

*With Perception Games it was not so evident [as there had been in ‘towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy’s Project’ event discussed in chapter five] that there was shared authorship – but I feel that there is something very subtle and actually really key to the work that is to do with the authority of the performer. The performer cannot do what she is ‘supposed’ to do. There is no clear, ‘Yes that was right, good etc.’ There is a need for the performer to embody the concept; to be in a negotiation with unknowing; to inhabit a specifically framed perceptual state of giving attention - and to bring an authority to that. There is no one to rely on but oneself as performer. The performer is autonomous...*

(Irvine, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012)

**Autonomy, authority and authorship**

The autonomy being addressed in the self-interview is not one of individual choice making, not the voice of an autonomous subject within a system of representation, not the individual performer sounding her voice within an

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<sup>67</sup> The score ‘change when you recognize’, over time, became the fifth score of the initial practices: Initial practice E: *if you know – change*.

ensemble of heterogeneous voices. It is an autonomy that operates within and as part of an occurring process.

The situation that each score proposes requires activation; what may happen is not fixed in advance. In entering the situation the performer meets a growing sense of responsibility commensurate with a diminishing sense of certainty with regard to outcome. The autonomy operates in this movement of responsibility and uncertainty. The responsibility is one of availability in the moment, in the situation: one of readiness, of primedness in uncertainty. The performer operates less as a thinking subject, more as an agential force of change, thinking in and for the emerging event. A subject position (perhaps) flits momentarily in the arising of a decision undertaken as an action in the flux of change. The activity generated in this dynamic situation produces the choreographic event. It is in this that *acts of thinking* occur. Autonomy on the part of the performer, in terms of her capacity to act in an immediacy, and without the intent to fulfil the will of another, is a crucial aspect of this producing. It is in the activation of the performer's autonomy, in her *acts of thinking* that *non-representational* composing arises.

The question of my own authorship was to become focused around the authoring of the scores. My writing would be an authoring of performers' autonomy in which a future authorial capacity of the performer would operate in the event of the scores being activated. My authorial role then, was the creating of compositional contours, processual operational constraints, which would only achieve a life in being lived-in through being worked with. In the series of 'Perception Frames' workshops I began to transpose the practices into written form, and continued working with these written instructions, testing, discussing and making adjustments.

***You were surprised by some of the responses to the written scores. What do you think was happening there?***

*In this period of working, when new participants have come and met the work as a written score – or more accurately in the early stages of its being written – I’ve encountered certain mis-understandings. It happens at the level of language. People read in their existing knowledge and understanding. They read in their history. They read in the past. I’d like the written score to invite engagement other-than through a discursive or interpretive attitude of mind. The scores need to be engaged-with actually. They need to be experienced.*

(Irvine, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013)

The question of how language, itself a discursive medium, might invite a mode of thinking that is alert to the conceptual concerns of the work - that is to a quality of thinking in perceptual sensing - became a pressing drive. I wanted language to operate in such a way that in the act of reading the frames, a suspension of judgement and conclusion as to determinate possibilities might be invoked, such that an inquiry might commence. At the same time it is acknowledged that the reader/practitioner needs to be ‘willing’ to enter this terrain of conceptual and perceptual inquiry.

My response to these concerns was to write general instructions and to place them as part of the introduction to *Perception Frames*. I noted earlier that the general instructions present the conceptual concerns in a simple and direct way (page 152). They also present the perceptual orientation of the work, in that

they prioritise in simple terms, sensing and doing as activities to be undertaken *prior* to discussion. Instructions 2, 3 and 5 in particular highlight this:

2. The scores aim to generate body-mind ‘thinking’ in the immediate moment of working with them. This is a mode of thinking that seeks to avoid anticipating or planning in advance. It involves keeping your attention on sensing and perceiving in a present moment. It’s more about working with these intentions than about getting it ‘right.’

3. It is important to read and to ‘sense into’ the instructions for a score before working with it.

[...]

5. Reflection and discussion can be useful. Do this after working with the score. Personal writing and group discussion can then be used to reflect on what arose in the activity and to develop particular strategies in working. In practice this will mean reflecting on how you worked to stay ‘in’ a score: what helped you to stay sensing and perceiving and avoiding planning and anticipating?

(Irvine, 2014: 9)

For the performer/practitioner, willing to enter the terrain in the mode suggested, and who is then grappling with the processes, there is a complex mix of finding herself both constrained by the instructions and yet in a situation that is compositionally open. One participant noted that, “It’s not that the frames ‘force’ you to not compose. You have to be willing to give up. Then the frames give a possibility for a different kind of composing. It’s a process – and it’s really demanding.” This comment, made during the latter stages of the research, indicates the capacity of the work to not only challenge the performer, but to generate composition through non-wilful means: through a ‘giving-up.’ I suggest that it is in ‘giving up’ that a quality of thinking in and for the occurring event arises.

### **Thinking in/for the occurring event**

The process of composing that the participant speaks of, is an *act of thinking* that arises in and is generative of the occurring event. The various scores orientate attention not towards what is being produced, so not towards actively deciding what would work well. Rather they orientate attention towards noticing-producing-happening: a noticing that, in its occurring, becomes part of the situation that the performer is then dealing with. What is given up is an 'image' of what will happen; a resting in the familiarity of known sensation; a reliance on habituated modes of action; a 'knowing' in advance where it's going while in the particulars of action, sensing, attending.

While the initial practices operate to hone performer awareness, and the early practice frames are primarily solo practices, these feed into the subsequent practice frames and the two extended scores. In these the performer is operating in a relational situation that is open to infinite possibilities of 'change' in her giving of attention. The performer is autonomous in the sense that her responsibility is to the situation, rather than to the choreographer: she is autonomous *and* part-of the changing situation. The agency that she enacts through her attention in perceptual sensing is a relational occurring. It is thinking in and for the event's unfolding, in the immediacy of thought arising, in processes of perceptual sensing.

### **Conclusion**

*Perception Frames* exists as an invitation to enter into perceptual sensing processes. It seeks to offer situations for practice and performance that are open, so indeterminate with regard to outcome, and specific with regard to the constraining of attention in an immediacy of sensing and perceiving. The frames pull forward a qualitative dimension of immediate perceptual experience in which there is a non-separation of mind and body and in which the

perceptibility (of the act) of perception can bring an augmented sense in the performer of 'thinking' arising *in and for* the occurring event.

## Conclusion

### Overview

This thesis proposes a development within conceptual dance from the staging of a critique of representation to a mode of practice that functions in a more generative register; the notion of a *non-representational poetics* is advanced and positioned as a genealogical extension in the field of conceptual dance. This proposition has been examined in the context of an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award with the UK dance organization Dance4, an organization whose as yet under articulated support of challenging and experimental dance and choreographic practice from 1999 to the present day is acknowledged. The research has taken a mixed modal approach that has included an analysis of three works programmed in Dance4's Nottdance Festival between 1999 and 2003 - *Invisible Dances* by Bock & Vincenzi (UK), *Project* by Xavier Le Roy (Fr/D) and *Schreibstück* by Thomas Lehmen (D) - and practice as research through my recent choreographic practice - in the development of *what remains and is to come* (in collaboration with Katrina Brown) and *Perception Frames* – both while Research Artist at Dance4. It is in the written articulation of these five works, which have been variously supported by Dance4, that a *non-representational poetics of choreography* is identified.

*Non-representational poetics*, as used in this thesis, refers to ways of developing and performing choreography that generate the work other-than through representational orders of thinking and the allegiance to recognition that representation entails. Drawing on philosopher Gilles Deleuze's challenge to representation, the research has taken his concern with "the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself" (Deleuze, 2004: 176) and orientated it towards choreography, to address choreographers' and performers' thinking. The perspective of practice is privileged in this thesis, and has enabled a practical



investigation of perceptible *acts of thinking* in the occurring of choreographic practices.

There has been a mutually imbricated concern with choreography and philosophy, with a philosophical concern operating *in* the choreographic practices and the choreographic practices themselves enacting a philosophical inquiry. The thesis therefore asserts choreography's capacity to address philosophical concerns through practice itself. The thesis has introduced theorists who share a concern with unfounded thinking in practice and whose articulations resonate with the creative concerns. Isabelle Stengers' "ecology of practices" and her concern that the "situation be given to power to make us think and not recognise" (Stengers, 2005: 185) and Karen Barad's "agential realist ontology" and "the notion of *intra-action*" (Barad, 2007: 139) that addresses intra-relational becoming and the capacities of the material world have been introduced. Also of import has been Erin Manning and Brian Massumi's shared concern with processual qualities of thinking and perception's role in that. This has been introduced through a consideration of the co-operations of causal efficacy, which draws on past experience to provide the sense of "how things go together" (Manning, 2012: 54-55) and the qualitative dimension of perception, that of presentational immediacy operating at "the perceptual level of complexity and subtlety" (Manning, 2012: 55).<sup>68</sup> Resonances have at times been pulled out and unpicked to help articulate ways of thinking around the creative practices - rather than to explain those practices.

The aim has been to develop and articulate conditions for a *non-representational poetics of choreography*. The thesis that has emerged is that *non-representational poetics* operates through the activation of agential-

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<sup>68</sup> It has been noted on page 62 that Manning and Massumi's use of the terms causal efficacy and presentational immediacy draw on process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947).

relational processes through which the work comes into being. These processes are constrained with regard to how they compose situations for choreographer and performer thinking; they are open with regard to outcome. Within this, thinking is understood as an event, as a process that occurs in a mutuality of mind and body awareness.

There is a particular feature to how agency operates in the *non-representational poetics* of this thesis. While all parties to a *non-representational* mode of working have agency, it is not an agency that is distinct to each individual party. Rather agency operates in the event of relations. A consequence of this attribute is that the choreography is constructed through processual means. It 'builds up' through specific agential-relational processes being activated, rather than through the fulfilling of a previously designed structure.

### **Moving from critique towards a *non-representational poetics***

While the earlier conceptual dance work, Jérôme Bel's *Jérôme Bel* (1995), discussed in chapter one, functions as a critique of representation through working *with* representation to present and expose processes of representation, a *non-representational poetics* makes tangible - to the choreographer and performer - the agential-relational processes of the work's coming into being. The thesis argues that an expansion of Bel's critique, and a movement towards a *non-representational poetics*, is achieved in Thomas Lehmen's *Schreibstück*, as discussed in chapter three, which exposes the structural and agential processes of a system that is not representational.

The various parties to *Schreibstück* - producers, choreographers and performers – are agents who act for the constructing of a system that Lehmen has authored. The self-producing aspect of the system, in which three versions of the work are performed in one performance, means that the groups work alongside each other - each distinct and self-contained. For the individual

choreographer/performer grouping there is agency in the process of developing their individual rendition of the score. However in performance, due to the structural operations, although relations between components can be 'read', there is no actual relation with other elements of the system.

While a representational mode of thinking on the part of the choreographer and performer may operate within the composing and performing of the score, this functions in a system that is not representational. Importantly, choreographer and performer are self-reflexively aware of this. Consequently, their engagement is orientated away from signification of individual actions towards structural operations. This is both the achievement and the limit of *Schreibstück's* extension from the critique of representation. The four other works that are addressed operate through processes that combine agency and relations.

### **Conditions for a *non-representational poetics***

The research has found conditions that facilitate a *non-representational poetics* in both the making/composing stage and in the doing/performing stage of choreographic practice. In each of these stages an initial and necessary attitude, in choreographer and performer, is that of coming without pre-intent about determinate outcomes. Also in both stages, qualities of giving attention have come forward, as has the giving up of volition. In the performing stage, a particular aspect that has come forward is the role and framing of perception in ways that constrain attention. The autonomy of the performer has been identified as important in this. A further necessary condition of a *non-representational poetics* that has been identified is that the performance event operates through the activation of specific agential-relational processes. Situations for practice that bring forward these various aspects and generate conditions for a *non-representational poetics* involve the delineation of certain

constraints on thinking, that force an emergent thinking in a non-separation of thought and action.

In the making stages of both *what remains and is to come* and in the research workshop 'towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' that investigated Le Roy's *General Rules Score*, a kind of logic to the situation functioned as a constraint on thinking. It was through a quality of attending in, and as part of, what is happening while working-with materials that the logic of a systematic increasing of relations between materials arose in *what remains and is to come*. In 'towards a re-activation of Xavier Le Roy's *Project*' the logic that arose, and which was consequent on *The General Rules Score*, related to that of games. In both cases the different 'logics' served to limit volition, since they referred to a logic that was 'outside' of individual desires and preferences. At the same time these 'logics' functioned to continue to bring forward qualities of giving attention in the situation of practice. These different 'logics' generated compositional decisions collectively; decisions arose in the 'logic' of the situation. They arose in relations with others and, in the case of *what remains and is to come*, also in relations with materials, and within which all parties were agential.

The thesis identifies attention in perception as a feature of a *non-representational poetics*. The compositional contours of *Invisible Dances* and of *Perception Frames* constrain thinking on the part of the performers through the way that they work with perception. In these works, frames for giving attention augment the performer's perceptibility of her perception and constrain her thinking in an immediacy of experiencing thought and action arising. In each case the compositional constraints generate conditions for this immersion: they 'force' qualities of immersion in perception. This is distinct from the composing of an image or action that is repeatable as such. Rather it is a composing of and for perceptual sensing processes, the outcome of which will always be different.

The necessity for the activation of specific processes in the live event, as noted above, is identified as a condition for a *non-representational poetics*. More specifically, the research has found that in the (live) activation of specific agential-relational process a *non-representational* producing happens. To put this in another way: when specifically constrained processes that operate through the conjoined operations of agency and relations are set in motion, they generate *something*. In the works developed and examined different and distinct processes have been identified.

The author's performance installation in collaboration with Katrina Brown *what remains and is to come*, as discussed in chapter four, operates through the live activation of intra-relational material processes that constitute the coming into being of the work. In the live activation, the performer is not looking back to re-create, but is in a state of giving attention in a present processual activation.

Xavier Le Roy's *General Rules Score*, as discussed in chapter five, operates through the activation of social processes, and as previously noted, through a logic of games within which all parties have agency. In the performing of games, performers' individual agency, and relations between performers, operate together to generate the event: a choreographic producing in a present moment, in the processes of game-play. These processes can orientate performers' thinking in a *non-representational* register and can potentially force *acts of thinking* - a thinking in the immediacy of thought and action arising. It was noted that when rules bring forward the perceptibility of perception in the performer, the tendency towards automatic and re-active modes of thinking driven by the goal of 'winning' are constrained and fuller conditions for *non-representational* thinking are generated.

The perceptibility of perception has been identified as an aspect of the processes of both *Invisible Dances* and *Perception Frames*, an aspect that makes

evident the autonomy of the performer while she is operating in relations as part of the larger choreographic event. *Invisible Dances* by Bock & Vincenzi, as discussed in chapter six, operates through an ongoing embedding of perceptual sensing processes through time. The situations that Bock & Vincenzi compose constrain each party to the work in an immersion in perceptual sensing processes. It is in that immersion that agency operates through performers' autonomous *acts of thinking*. Perceptual sensing processes are embedded in an ongoing manner in the construction of *Invisible Dances* such that that each new party to the work is constrained in her 'thinking' and action in part by processes undertaken by others. The choreographic work is produced through the relational events of perceptual sensing in the perceptibility to others' processes of perceptual sensing.

*Perception Frames* operates through instructions for giving attention in perceptual sensing. The scores are processual instructions and practices for an ongoing extending of attention in and as part-of the wider surroundings. The frames constrain thinking in a qualitative dimension of immediate perceptual experience – an experiential non-separation of mind and body and in which the perceptibility (of the act) of perception can bring an augmented sense of *acts of thinking*: a perceptible 'thinking' arising *in and for* the occurring event. The practitioner/performer in this is, by necessity, autonomous. She is also, by necessity of the mode of giving attention as part-of the situation, relational. It is in the conjoined operation of agency and relations in the activation of perceptual sensing processes, that the scores do their choreographic producing.

### **Distinct and less distinct producing**

Each of the works addressed in this thesis belong within an expanded notion of choreography in which choreography is untwined from dancing bodies. That is not to say that dancing does not or cannot occur in the performing of the works, but that the choreographic operates in each of the works *beyond* the

practice of dance. This is evident in the ‘products’ that the various works have engendered. These include: the performances that have happened and that may happen in a future; the written scores - of *Project*, *Schreibstück* and *Perception Frames* - that are capable of activating future performances; the book and the telephone piece of *Invisible Dances* themselves ‘products’ capable still of being listened to or read and so giving a future audience direct access to a past/still-present work. With the work *what remains and is to come* it includes many charcoal prints – remains that are a consequence of the performances though now separate from them existing as discrete ‘products.’ Although not directly relevant to the thesis, the book *what remains and is to come: a document*, is itself a distinct ‘product’ from the project. I highlight these aspects at the conclusion of this thesis to draw attention to how, although each work has been concerned with the activation of processes that engender a choreographic producing, in each case what has emerged has been performance events and other distinct ‘things’.

What I have not addressed in this thesis is how a *non-representational poetics* might function in situations that generate less distinct outcomes or outcomes that are not orientated towards theatre or gallery contexts. An example of a choreographic experiment that involved less distinct choreographic outcomes is the recent *what\_now* festival 2014 at Siobhan Davies Studios, London curated by Independent Dance in April 2014. Independent Dance website states that the event “re-imagin[e]d the idea of a festival by hosting a group of 20 dance artists to explore processes of moving through collective practice and theory” and in which the audience was invited to “be a part of what is happening” (Independent Dance 2014). An expansion of the choreographic through a *non-representational poetics* that is generative of situations, contexts or experiences that might occupying more dispersed social, online and/or political sphere(s) remains to be addressed in future research.

### **A last conclusion**

The thesis contributes new knowledge through firstly noting Dance4's importance in British dance by way of its introducing European conceptual dance to UK dance audiences in its Nottdance Festival from 1999 and furthermore through its ongoing support of experimental dance practices in the UK to the present day. Four interviews undertaken in the course of the research are included as appendices to the thesis and are, themselves, a unique contribution to the field of dance. The interview with Jane Greenfield, who was the Artistic Director of Dance4 during the period in which it emerged as an experimental and international dance organization, casts light on Greenfield's role in that seminal period. The interviews with Frank Bock, Simon Vincenzi and Fiona Templeton on their work in the piece *Invisible Dances* (1999-2006) offer new insights into their working methods during the project.

By drawing on works programmed in Nottdance and through my choreographic practice while Research Artist at Dance4, the thesis contributes new insights into conceptual dance processes and the modes of thinking through which they operate. In particular it identifies in the works that form part of the thesis and in the works analyzed, a novel articulation of a genealogical extension in the field of conceptual dance – a *non-representational poetics* that operates through the conjoined and processual operations of agency and relations to produce the work. This articulation has been made possible through privileging the perspective of choreographer and performer, rather than the perspective of spectator that Dance and Performance Studies tends to assume. In articulating through practice and written form the generative capacities of specific modes of thinking by choreographers and performers - or how *acts of thinking* can generate a choreographic event - the thesis contributes to the emerging field of Performance Philosophy as well as Dance and Performance Studies.



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**Also submitted as part of this thesis**

***Perception Frames: choreographic scores for practice and performance***

conceived and written by Rosanna Irvine

type set by Kevin Mount

This item is included separately and submitted with this bound thesis

***what remains and is to come***

created and performed by Katrina Brown and Rosanna Irvine

soundscore Tim Sayer

This work was examined at Backlit Gallery, Nottingham on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2013

The following two items are included as supporting documents

**DVD documentation of performance**

***what remains and is to come***

video recording at KARST Plymouth on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014

created and performed by Katrina Brown and Rosanna Irvine

video edit Rosanna Irvine

duration 55 minutes

This item is attached to inside back cover

***what remains and is to come: a document***

designed by Katrina Brown and Rosanna Irvine with Kevin Mount

supported by Arts Council England

This item is included separately and submitted with this bound thesis

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: An interview with Jane Greenfield

Appendix 2: An interview with Frank Bock

Appendix 3: An interview with Simon Vincenzi

Appendix 4: An interview with Fiona Templeton



## Appendix 1

### An interview with Jane Greenfield

at Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2011

Jane Greenfield: **JG**

Rosanna Irvine: **RI**

**RI:** *Can you talk a little bit about your work with Dance4?*

**JG:** It started in 1994, that's when I got the job as the director. My background has always been dance. I trained in it, and then when I graduated I worked in dance very much in a community and education kind of context. And then I worked at Nottingham Playhouse, when Ruth Mackenzie was the chief executive, at the time in the late 80s [and] early 90s when the Playhouse had an incredible kind of international presence. And some incredible work was being brought over, so it really opened my eyes ...

**RI:** *What kind of work was that?*

**JG:** The Playhouse was commissioning a lot of new writing from people like Alan Bleasdale; Companies like the Maly Theatre of St Petersburg, came over; Meredith Monk came over; Michael Clark would premiere there. It was a very rich time really. And I think also, what with that, and my time at Leicester Poli [Leister Polytechnic College now De Montfort University] where the dance degree dramatically changed overnight and the work [became] much more experimental. All of that was just kind of very good grounding. So the route into Dance4/Nottedance and then developing Nottedance, there was no big shift. The seeds were already sewn.

**RI:** *But you made a shift in a way.*

**JG:** Yes, yes, in a way. I mean, when we took over the festival, the festival had already existed in a small way, mostly as a platform for young work, regional work, and it was a weekend festival. And gradually, over the years, we just grew it and grew it, as we were able to secure more funding for it. And then we started to develop the international side of it, and I have to say that is where my focus was, in trying to bring international work. And for me in a way it was very simple. Nottingham at that time was an amazing place. There was the Nottedance Festival, there was also the NOW festival, there were live art magazines being produced in Nottingham. We had the Nottingham Trent University with its degree course producing very interesting artists. You had companies like Reckless Sleepers who were very prominent in the region. And you had an interesting bunch of personalities who were all after the same thing. So there was kind of the right constellation at play - in place. So it just sort of made it right really - to continue that and push that further.

**RI:** *The choice of focusing on the international: what was behind that?*

**JG:** Behind that was me wanting to get Dance4, the organisation, more recognized. I mean, I'm not saying I wasn't interested in the work - and you know that work wasn't being shown in this country. I mean occasionally it was being shown by Bush Hartshorn in Leeds, and actually he did present Jérôme [Bel] once I think, a couple of years prior to me. But - apart from Bush, who as and when he could at the Green Rooms when he was in Manchester - there was no dedicated festival platform for that kind of newer, more experimental kind of work, this kind of new area of dance and choreography. And I was very interested in it, I was very drawn to it, and it's just one of those things, I just thought, "There needs to be a platform for this work. They need to have a voice in this country. We're missing out on a whole scene of work." Coupled with the fact that Dance4, unlike some of the other national dance agencies, was a little bit low status, didn't quite have the visibility that the others had, and it was like "Let's make the festival our shop window."

**RI:** *So you did bring that work, and it was a long time before any other agency or producer picked it up...*

**JG:** Yes, yes. And also, once we had established the relationship with the Jérôme Bel Company, we then actually started to tour his work around the UK. We did one UK tour and it went to the ICA, to a number of places... And when, initially, we would present Jérôme's work, a lot of other, the majority of other venues, wouldn't take it, because they felt they wouldn't be able to get an audience for it. And that was kind of their excuse - their rational.

For me it was kind of an epiphany moment, especially when we brought over the first piece, which was called *Jérôme Bel* by Jérôme Bel. It was just...

**RI:** *What did you see in the work - in that sense of an epiphany?*

**JG:** I had never seen work like it before. I mean, I was ... ahhh.... It's hard to say really, because as the person who brought it over you spend most of your time worrying about your audience and practical things. My main concern was, "Are the audience going to like this?" We had a full house in the gallery [Bonington]. It was deadly quiet for the entire piece. Not a sound. Most of my time I was sitting thinking, "Oh my god, they're going to hate it, they're going to hate it! They're not going to see." And actually they loved it. They just loved it. You know ... [it was] of that time in a way... an immensely crafted, choreographic piece that has no dance in it, and yet, there is a beautifully crafted work - very sensitive work, very intelligent clever work, thinking dance.

**RI:** *And your epiphany was that to do with audience?*

**JG:** It was partly actually because I honestly thought, "They're going to hate it."

**RI:** *So it was like you saw, "Okay, they're ready."?*

**JG:** And I thought, "People are up for this. People want this." And it was like "Oh, we can do it then. We can do this."

**RI:** *And you carried on programming that kind of work. There was Xavier Le Roy, Thomas Lehmen ...*

**JG:** And then [also] there were, I suppose slightly different from that - people like Felix Ruckert, La Ribot... And it was also partly driven by the fact that we had a venue that was a gallery, you know, the Bonington Gallery, which is a large white space, which we had at our disposal. So again it was thinking about work that would work in that space, and a lot of his [Ruckert's] work, and Maria [La Ribot]'s work, some of Jérôme's work, subsequently some of Jonathon Burrows' work, Rosemary [Butcher]'s work looked beautiful in that space. The space really framed the work well.

**RI:** *In terms of British artists - you mentioned Rosemary Butcher and Jonathon Burrows, and in a sense they were already quite recognized, weren't they?*

**JG:** Yes.

**RI:** *And arguably very intelligent work, but maybe not quite as reduced as something like Jérôme Bel's or Xavier Le Roy?*

**JG:** No, no [in agreement]. I've always loved Rosemary's work, the kind of purity of it, and actually, one of my very first jobs, when I first graduated, I was working in Norfolk, again it would be in the late 80s I suppose, mid to late 80s, and I was what was called a dance animateur, and I had a small programming budget. And you know, Norfolk was kind of a real backwater then. One of the first companies I programmed was Rosemary Butcher, and again I remember, after programming it, thinking, "I wonder whether actually ... anyone's going to turn up." [Laughter] So I have often had those moments.

**RI:** *Did they like it?*

**JG:** Yes, they did. So that's always been a pattern for me. In the past I have programmed this work, and I feel I am taking a real risk with the audience, not just whether they show up, but whether they'll respond to it. So I have this double-edged thing, where I get very excited by the work, and then there's the moment of putting it on and presenting it, and it's "What are people...how are people going to take this?" So there's a moment of mild panic, really. But I have to say people have always responded very well, and Jérôme had a very loyal audience.

**RI:** *He had a cult following*

**JG:** Yes but [this was] before he became a cult figure. There was a real loyalty to that work. And people then started to come from further afield, and started to travel up from London and other places.

**RI:** *Not just dance audiences but live art audiences, visual art audiences ...*

**JG:** Yes exactly.

**RI:** *Did you have the perception that the audience were just ready for the work? You mentioned other venues not being entirely willing to program it - but when you programmed the work audiences enjoyed it. So what is it? What is going on there? Do you sense there is the need to prepare the ground for an audience?*

**JG:** I don't know whether you need to prepare the ground. Because if it's really good, and if it really hits the spot, you can put it in front of an audience that's never seen work like that before, that has had no preparation and development, but if it hits the spot, they'll like it. So, it's "which route do you take?" and, you know, there is no one right answer. I think, in terms of Nottingham, we didn't necessarily prepare the ground. I think Nottingham prepared the ground for that type of work, because the whole culture that was going on at that time allowed for that kind of work. So, in some ways, we were fortunate, because it wasn't too painful a transition or move into that work. I think for some of the other venues, and for some of my other national dance agency colleagues, they were just too nervous because their audiences were more conventional, you know, more traditional - and they didn't have that kind of live art culture going on in their cities. So when we did, for example, tour people like Jérôme and others, we were touring into the live art network, not the dance network - such as the Arnolfini [Bristol] or the Tramway [Glasgow]. So, it's an interesting one, sometimes I think, yes, you need to prepare the audience, and other times I think you don't, you just give audiences credit, and it all comes down to whether the work's good.  
[laughter]

**RI:** *It sounds that for you the programming was quite an organic development of what was [already] going on. But for me [it seems like] a really pivotal moment in terms of British dance, and what I see as a gap of British artists [working in this way.] Nicola [Conibere]'s work last night ['The Beckoning and the Escapade' at Nottingham Contemporary] belongs, it seems to me, in the same realm of questioning, maybe a bit like Jérôme, questions of representation: how might an audience engage with the work in a way that's quite open, and in a way that is in a sense generous towards them. It's more expansive than the straight audience / performer relationship, though still using conventional oppositional audience / performer set up. And there was a lot of tension set up ...*

**JG:** Yes, yes.

**RI:** *I am wondering if you perceive there was any tension around the British artists attempting to - or making - work in that perhaps more conceptual, more thoughtful, more reduced way. Did you sense a responsibility towards those artists? Did you see artists working in that way? Was there work to develop in Britain? You know, what was your sense?*

**JG:** You know my memory is, if you were true to Nottdance, and the spirit of Nottdance and the aesthetics we were after - there was a very small amount of British work that fulfilled that. There were people like Jonathon [Burrows] and people like Rosemary [Butcher]. And some other artists who were experimenting with text and performance like Wendy Houston. (And) Javier De Frutos - who we actually supported quite a bit in the early days. But there was actually a very small number of those artists, and that is why we actually started increasingly to look, particularly in Europe at that work,

because I didn't feel there was that work in the UK, apart from a small handful of artists.

Obviously, there was. But it was a very small handful of artists.

**RI:** *Is it possible that there were artists, but they weren't having the opportunity to show?*

**JG:** I'm not sure. Certainly not in the early to mid 90s. Probably, I would say, after 2000 [that there were more British artists working in this way.] Absolutely, then it shifts, then it changes. But prior to that, no, not really. You know I left in 2004, and I think, the way Paul, particularly now, has carried on the mantel... [He] is looking at that kind of work, but also trying to look at that [kind of] work that's happening [now] in the UK and trying to support those artists who are doing that.

You know during Nottdance, the ten, eleven years I did it, I probably disappointed an awful lot of UK artists because I wouldn't program them. You know ... but they clearly felt like, for them, Nottdance could have been a context ... maybe. And it was an interesting international festival, and they would want a gig...

**RI:** *What was your criterion during that time for inclusion?*

**JG:** It was partly personal

**RI:** *So taste?*

**JG:** Partly, but taste is influenced by, you know, your knowledge and your judgment, and the kind of context you are working in. So it was clearly about, you know, work that I liked as a curator, but work that I thought my audiences would like as well. So I wanted my audiences to like [laughter] what I saw, you know, it's very like...I want my audiences to like what I like, which is a bit of a kind of an egotistical thing to say, but you say it because ... I was so clear. For me it was so clear what the festival was, and what it wasn't.

**RI:** *Sounds like you were really concerned with quality. You were working with a series of more experimental, distilled in a particular way, thoughtful work ...*

**JG:** Yes. Yes. There was flexibility, but essentially those artists were playing with the form - and they were questioning. Those artists, for a want of a better phrase, they were kind of working outside of the mainstream, and working in the margins. And I was very interested in the margins, and there was a period of time, certainly in the late 90s and early 2000s where there was some very interesting work, I think, going on in the margins. And, you know, that was also interesting for a small number of other colleagues that I then worked with, like Bush [Hartshorn] at Leeds, and like Steve Slater at Tramway [Glasgow], Helen Cole in Bristol [at Arnolfini]. We actually in the end formed ourselves into a network of producers to try and support that work.

**RI:** *You used the term 'thinking dance' earlier. What do you mean by that? [mutual laughter]*

**JG:** There is a certain kind of... I want to use my words carefully. There's a certain kind of depth to their work. There's thinking and intelligence behind it. There's a questioning behind it that goes quite deep... (pause) ... They are bringing an intelligence to it that I think is sometimes missing, or certainly was missing, I think, in mid-scale British dance - which seemed quite superficial. You know, it might have been very well performed for sure, and beautiful, technically very skilful, but working on a superficial level - with some artists. And it just wasn't going deep enough. That's not to say that you then have to have pieces that are incredibly complex and mind-bending and difficult. You know pieces at the end of it can still be quite light and playful - but it's the process that's been used in order to get there.

**RI:** *Maybe Wendy [Houston] is someone who can be quite playful with that intelligence...?*

**JG:** Yes! You know there can be humour to their work, such as Wendy, and it can be quite theatrical and playful, but actually there's some clear thinking and intelligent thinking that has gone on in developing that - and the same with Jonathon as well - and Rosemary.

**RI:** *It seems to me that one of the ways that the European work was functioning, was in a way very non-theatrical, even if it was using the theatrical context like Jérôme Bel was, the actions were really not theatrical at all.*

**JG:** Yes

**RI:** *This was very deliberate and very clearly stated [in Bel's work.] But it wasn't that aspect of the work that particularly was guiding you...?*

**JG:** No (pause) ... because I think actually I could have probably seen a piece of work that was very theatrical, possibly, and you know, if it was something I really liked and felt was a really good piece of work and right for the festival, it would have been in the festival. So I was, I suppose, I was still quite open and broad - to some degree... (pause) ... I'm just trying to think, it was such a long while back. I mean some of Felix [Ruckert]'s work was quite ... more theatrical - but he was certainly questioning the whole relationship between performer and audience, in quite a challenging way, and really pushing boundaries further and further and further, with how you might meet an audience, and what you can and can't do with that audience, and what is permissible. He was really, really playing with that and pushing that. And that was what was interesting to me.

**RI:** *And what was required of the performer in that was a very intense kind of focus ...*

**JG:** Yes

**RI:** *I come with these questions around 'presence' and 'representation.' What strikes me quite strongly is: that wasn't your way of thinking at all particularly.*

**JG:** Yes. These words weren't even in my vocabulary. And actually they weren't in many people's vocabularies.

**RI:** *But it's in the scholarship – post the event*

**JG:** Yes.

**RI:** *The crossovers between live art, performance and dance that were happening around that time ... I think that a lot of the practices of live art seemed to be questioning 'presence', but maybe people weren't saying that ...*

**JG:** Yes, but also live art has always kind of had its roots in the academic, much more so than dance, much more so. And I think all those things that you are talking about in terms of 'representation' and 'presence' they are rooted in informed theory, in academic research, in a way that dance hasn't that [history], that same thing - there is much more of that within live art practices.

**RI:** *Yes. But maybe now, dance is entering into it...*

**JG:** Yes, yes

**RI:** *With this engaging with the practices of live art and performance then it inevitably ... I don't know what comes first, the practice or the thinking ... but these things start to become intermingled. And so the writing, the discourses start to inform practices differently. I mean I am hopeful for dance ... that this is what will happen ...*

**JG:** Yes. Yes. For me it was in a way much more simple, more fundamental, which was: "This work is not being seen in this country. No-one is presenting it. Why aren't they presenting it? This work is good work. This work is a breath of fresh air. This work needs to be here and sit next to this rather mundane British dance, and it needs to show up British dance." And that's why. And I liked it. I thought it was very interesting work. For me it was also about saying - "We need to have this work in the UK."

**RI:** *Can you trace the line from bringing that work to what's happening now in British dance?*

**JG:** Well I would say, in a way, there is a greater understanding. Saddlers Wells are presenting – e.g. the Jérôme Bel retrospective [in 2008]; the Purcell Rooms; Siobhan Davies Studios are doing very interesting stuff. Now she [Siobhan Davies] has that space she's able to play with us more... So actually, it's becoming more mainstream, in a way, than it was. I mean; it's more present in the mainstream institutions than it was.

**RI:** *But what's important, even if it's more mainstream, is that the thinking about dance is shifting...egh? Let's hope!*

**JG:** Yes. Before you would never have seen that kind of work within a mainstream context or in a mainstream theatre or venue. And we are now. And so it's becoming ... it's not marginalized as much as it was, by any means. And more artists are working in an interdisciplinary way I would say. So ... it's kind of coming of age a bit ...

**RI:** *Thank you Jane!*

## Appendix 2

### An interview with Frank Bock

on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012, London

Frank Bock: **FB**

Rosanna Irvine: **RI**

**RI:** *I'd like to talk with you about making 'Invisible Dances'. It seems that there were two stages in the project – a research stage and then a composing stage. I'd like to ask if that is how it actually was, and also about the collaborative relationship between you and Simon during those two stages.*

**FB:** Well. I think that for us it was nearly all research time – more than 20 research blocks. We have a little booklet that outlines all the blocks [Bock & Vincenzi, 2006a]. And some of them were really short, like a blindfolded journey in Armenia. That's just one intervention for example. Some of them were one week long. Some of them were two weeks. They were all research blocks until the end in a way, I'd say. And the piece was always sort of making itself until we did the final piece ... when the piece had to kind of implode ... so the lights would come down or things would break. The piece somehow had to self-destruct, because it would never end otherwise. We had to find a way of ending the piece within the work.

So there was always a sense of the research - even when it was more presented. And most of the blocks – many of the blocks – had a presentation of some kind. The fifth block [in 1999] was called *Invisible Dances... in front of people watching* at the Purcell Rooms. So there was that sense of: its happening and oh and there's people watching it. So they're implicated in it in some way ...

And you asked about the collaboration between me and Simon?

**RI:** *Yes I mean did you have distinct roles?*

**FB:** Simon comes from a relationship with the image that's very particular in his work and in his scenography and his directing. We'd find a starting point and then he would kind of open up these kinds of spaces that we'd have to fall into, or discover more in. I guess that because I was in the work so much somehow he was always outside ... depending on which block we did ... He would drive many of the questions that would come or the things that we would explore. He was very responsible for the kind of poetic world that it inhabited.

There were things that we had both found together in previous works, in *Forest Dances*, the sense of being caught, the body being taken over, being possessed, and the Dionysian body, the idea of states – of working in states. There were certain thematics that had existed in previous works that Simon would sort of elaborate upon. But we literally just started with a very basic idea of wanting people to listen to their



own 'something' on headphones. And then we thought what would that be...? We thought: what would it be like if it was the interior of the body. So we literally followed. Each block kind of followed on ...

**RI:** *Is that what you mean by the work was kind of making itself?*

**FB:** Yes. Yes.

**RI:** *You were talking of Simon being 'outside.' Do you mean that he was making certain choices through visual perception, through what he was seeing...? Through how he was reading what was happening?*

**FB:** Yes. And we would both be out, but I would be inside and out. We would watch some of the very abandoned material and we'd both be kind of in awe of the kind of intimacy of those states. They were almost death-like states at times. We were seeing the performers ... in such unusual relationships to themselves, to their life, to their living. We would both get very excited by seeing that, by seeing those things together. There was a real sense that we would recognize similar things as they were kind of unfolding.

I guess in the final version I could make a lot of choices while I was in the work ... The final work[s] mostly generated themselves and they [the performers] would just follow the gaps on head phones. The piece was partly structuring itself.

**RI:** *Could you tell me how that was happening?*

**FB:** Yes – well we'd have a block of time. We knew that there were certain things like, for example Fiona's [Fiona Templeton] description of the telephone piece<sup>69</sup> was something that – certainly in one of the versions – became a structure within the bigger performance. Somebody was working with that as a score

**RI:** *With her text in headphones?*

**FB:** Yes, certainly when we did it [Act 2, *L'Altrove*] in Venice. Valentina [Formenti] worked with Fiona's text and would try and translate it - into Italian. So she knew she had two hours of that. So there were certain structural things.

And then we brought the show into a certain time block.

With Luke [Stoneham] doing the sound [in Act 3, *Here, As If They Hadn't Been, As If They Are Not*] - he would just drag the sound back. He knew that he would have a certain time (I can't exactly remember how long it was) before the final 8 minutes of

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<sup>69</sup> Each audience member phoned in to listen to *invisible dances ... from afar: a soundwork for the telephone*. They heard the voice of poet Fiona Templeton giving her recorded moment-by-moment account of the performance of *invisible dances ... from afar*, a live event at which she was the sole audience member. The work was presented at Nottedance in 2003, Dance Umbrella, London (2003) and SpringDance, Utrecht (2005). Templeton's text was later transcribed for the book publication *Invisible Dances... From Afar: A Show That Will Never Be Shown* (Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a).

the piece, which was Tim [Gebells] being lit with his own image with night vision. His image was illuminating him. (Actually it was my image). The show would be kind of pushing ahead and Luke would keep dragging it back – dragging the sound back - on his apple mac. He'd just be dragging back the sound - the sound the audience was hearing.

The performers were on ipod shuffles with big long gaps in the sound, and suddenly they'd just go [shifts obliquely indicating going into movement] when the gap [of no sound] was over – they'd just go ...

**RI:** *And would they know those gaps?*

**FB:** No

**RI:** *Was Luke controlling that?*

**FB:** No – the sound scores were prepared before. What I'm talking about here is Theo and his street journeys. [During a 2001 residency at Dance 4 in Nottingham, Theo Cowley started video recording street journeys of strangers.] The recordings were transcribed into spoken language. The top half of the body was transcribed separately from the bottom. The transcriptions were used as the scores for the street journey material. The performer had in one ear the top half of a body and in the other ear a bottom half - and he never knew which journeys he'd get, or at what time.

We also worked with the street journey material on video. Other performers were oriented towards a screen hidden on stage while their bodies had to follow the camera down the streets of Venice, London, Amsterdam.

But with the control of sound/setting off an interior journey - the control we (the headphone people) had was that we'd put tapes in each other's cassette players and then do the interior body journey material [also called abandoned body material] and that was the only material where we had control over putting someone in the space and getting them going.

**RI:** *And was that sound material 'known' to the performers?*

**FB:** Nobody knew what tapes they would have. They would know the rules of that material. This was the very early material that came from the very first blocks of work we did which was listening to interior body sounds, and falling ... falling into that ...

**RI:** *The process of working was 'falling into' that sound?*

**FB:** Yes... being abandoned to that interior space ... interior spaces in the body ... and just falling and moving within that. The performers had been doing that since 1999, and did it all the way through to 2007. The same performers did it from the beginning. (I think there were a few extra.) But we really sort of knew, understood, what that material was by then. So ... performers would never quite know what tape they would get because there were loads and loads of tape. I mean after a while you'd sort of recognize, or you'd say, I really hope I don't get pink dog. And you'd go, 'Oh no!'

But then once it started you had no choice. So there was a sense that volition was taken out. Once the material began there wasn't the idea of choices... Of course perhaps you could argue that there's always some choices being made. We tried to take that out as much as possible. You just had to ... you were just taken ... you just had to follow that - whatever you were given. Your responsibility for yourself was given to people around the space - to take care of you, so you wouldn't fall off the stage or hit anyone. So we would make sure that there were always certain people [performers] outside. Not everyone could have tapes on at the same time with that material.

**RI:** *The last Act ['Invisible Dances: Here As If They Hadn't Been, As If They Are Not'] was performed a few times. And so every performance would have been different? And just the time frame for it, controlled by Luke, would be the same?*

**FB:** Yes

**RI:** *And it could start differently even ... because it depended on the tapes and they were selected randomly?*

**FB:** Yes - so people would end up in very different parts of the space. Sometimes it was quite wondrous to stand in there and see the show happening. It was always a very exciting place to be in – and not just speaking for myself. I mean we'd come off stage and go, 'Wow just where were we? What happened?'

**RI:** *It's really interesting to me to hear you say 'we' at that point. I want to ask you about the relationship between performers. My sense from what I've read and seen is that each performer is in an 'own world'?*

**FB:** Yes

**RI:** *What was your sense of the 'we' and the 'own worlds' and the relations between people?*

**FB:** Well in a way this piece had a number of different companies in it. So the people who were doing that material were in that company and there were various other solos or there was the trio of people doing street journeys. They [the street journey company] were just watching a screen ...

They were all working from one screen and with journeys that came from previous blocks in Amsterdam or in Venice or in Edinburgh. And the performers didn't know when they would be set off. They would just have to go en masse. They would just 'go' with everything in the image - every camera movement. They'd have to deal with the camera as a kind of visual storm ... as if they were in a visual storm. And they'd try to represent everything that was within the frame – buildings ... people ... all the movement pushing through space ... the left or the right. Sometimes they would spin off in their own version of left and right so that actually they'd be off in a slightly different trajectory ... and they'd have to just stay with it. And they'd have to keep their relationship to the screen. So they were a cluster.

[There were other companies] for example there was Rose [English]. She was working

with the medium's text with lots of gaps. There were these fragments with James's [James Brown, the medium] text coming through.

We had this folk dance, which we would do before each performance. This was the only moment when we were all together as a company. Everyone would just go off into their 'other places' [during the show] because the show always happened in all these 'other places'. We just happened to be in the same place. We had to find all the rules to kind of police that - or to make it work. We spent an enormous amount of time just teaching the blind performers this communal dance that we all did. I remember there was this, 'Surely we're going to perform this – we've spent so much time learning it!' [Laughter] And 'No [we won't perform it.] We need this thing that we always do before we go out.'

**RI:** *You were talking there in terms of 'rules.' How were you conceiving that folk dance in terms of rules?*

**FB:** I mean it was just a very set piece ... it was just to do with a big communal, physical dance - doing together. And as well as that people had their own process of re-finding connection to something – which was their rules of warming up I suppose - like Nanette [Kincaid]. We'd taken one of these dances, one of the abandoned interior body dances, which we called the Navraj dance, and tried to reconstruct it. Nanette did that material and she did it at various speeds – fast at 30 seconds, at 60 seconds and a slow version 10 minutes. And part of her warm up was to watch the slowed down video before going on stage, or the fast or whatever it was. So different people had different ways of warming up. They needed different things.

**RI:** *I want to ask you something about the street journeys and watching the video. The kinds of decision people were making in order to (what you said was) 'represent' what was happening in the screen. So there were decisions about moving 'as' the camera? Is that right?*

**FB:** Yes

**RI:** *What other decisions were there? I mean did you 'catalogue' those decisions, name them?*

**FB:** In a way we just said you have no choice and you're not making any decisions. You have to do everything that's there. So you're almost trying to do something that's impossible. You're always faced with the impossibility of what you are doing. That's why it sometimes had a sense of being in a storm, of being just caught with ... the task was to represent everything.

**RI:** *Without naming what 'everything' was?*

**FB:** Yes – without naming what 'everything' was. There was walls, people, journey, left, right, camera tilting this way, there could be people coming ... it was trying to do everything. I think we started off in Edinburgh looking out the window, looking at the street scene, looking for interesting people to follow or to copy. And then we just thought – actually, the camera! There's so much going on, just in a camera, going down

a corridor. We don't need to find an interesting old man to follow.

Street journeys came out of this need ... having been so interior [in the earlier blocks with the abandoned body material], and how difficult that was ... so the next block we thought, 'Oh we have to do something outside.' So it didn't come just from a sense of a logical artistic thing of journeys or whatever. It was also a kind of physical necessity, saying, 'Ok. This is what we need. We need to not be in this kind of sensory place ... We'd done three blocks of that ... We'd done quite a bit of that.'

Mette Edvardsen was in *Invisible... Dances in front of people watching*. She'd been in the very first block. And then she couldn't come to the second block, which I think was Nottdance. Then there was The Purcell Rooms [Block 5 all 1999]. She couldn't come then either. She was in Brussels on the telephone. So the phone came in and all she says is, 'Hello. Hello. Is anybody there?' And the technician, who was patching her through, kept saying [in whispering voice] 'Yes. You're on. You're on.'

[laughter]

And she said, 'Hello. Hello. Is anybody there?' That was all she was allowed to say. And he kept saying, 'They can hear you. They can hear you.' Well I don't think the audience could hear him. But she said that is was a real struggle, because she just had this one instruction that she had to make. And we hadn't clued up the technical chap - which was quite funny.

[laughter]

**RI:** *I want to ask about the use of the word 'absence', which gets used in relation to this work. Martin Hargreaves [2001] writes of absence in relation to the project. And the Kaai Theatre blurb [no date, a] online spoke of absence. Then also you said in an interview at Kaai Theatre about Luke's sound work cutting out ambient sound - so producing 'the roar of the body' [no date, b]. It seems that in a sense this reveals that there isn't an absence of sound. There is something else - other sound. So in perception I don't think we can easily speak of absence?*

**FB:** No [agreeing]

**RI:** *So how was it that you conceived of absence ... or did you? Was it actually a word that was there in your thinking?*

**FB:** It wasn't actually. I don't think we ever did. I think that sort of came from people talking. We were always ... there was always like a somewhere else ... rather like a 'nothing' ... I think that [was the case] even with the pink noise - it's so completely dense with sounds. Pink noise is kind of like white noise; it's a frequency of sound. We used it quite a bit in the piece - in The Purcell Rooms particularly ... it just filled ... a kind of roar ... fuzz. But if you keep playing this noise you start to hear all these other sounds. You're convinced you can hear people screaming and shouting. You can hear all kinds of things ... in it. We used pink noise quite a bit - because it seemed to hold and contain so many things, though it's just a block of sound. Of 'nothing' sound...

**RI:** *I want to ask you about your sense of audience in the event. But I'll go back a little first. You have already told me that in a way it was all research, even when you went into 'Prelude' and the following two Acts.*

**FB:** I think that was when it started to become a show - in *Prelude*.

**RI:** *And then the word 'meaning' coming in. In the Kaai Theatre interview you said that at a certain point you became more interested in the 'meaning' of the theatrical presentation, that it became more important [Kaai Theatre no date, b]. From what you've told me, you've spoken of the work making itself so I can sense 'the work' coming forward. But the word 'meaning' – how was that coming forward? ... And following that would be the question about audience.*

**FB:** I mean ... I think you should be asking Simon these questions. But I think, for example, with Tim [Gebbers] the blind performer - he did the dance, the solo in the toga. The material came from re-producing journeys that he knew in London ... that he emotionally could reconstruct or create a kind of language from. And he'd put them on my body. And there were so many of them about safety: 'Ok, it's safe now.' There were so many things in his journeys. And Simon worked with them [and] in a way Tim became a sort of Greek messenger ... the idea of always talking about the unspeakable things that had happened ... away ... in battles. That whole tradition. In a way he became a representative of a whole theatrical tradition ... and that also poetically dealt with 'awayness' ... somewhere else ... and the sort of importing [of] that ... speaking from that place. So that's an example of how something that just started as a somatic, or working with affect, or working with the body in a certain way - then became realized into a theatrical form.

The Show Boy came from something Fiona [Templeton] had said - from a way she had described the show for the telephone [*Invisible Dance ... From Afar* a soundwork for the telephone]. One element was someone doing a sort of strip and then colouring themselves in black and [so] disappearing. So they would 'reveal' themselves and then over the two hours would paint themselves black and so 'disappear.' And Fiona made some reference where she called him "The Black Show Boy" [in Bock & Vincenzi, 2004a: 112] And then he became The Black Show Boy ... just through her poetic reading of what she saw ... in *Prelude* [2004] at Clore Studios. The Black Show Boy became something that could never quite get on stage. And then that became The Red Show Boy – it kind of evolved over time. So there were these kinds of fragments or these little openings that the theatrical world started to reveal itself [through].

**RI:** *And I suppose in that there is a sense of audience - because it's the theatrical world and it's an image that we can name in some way and have some agreement around. When I watch recordings of the work, I can feel the potency of it – the affective potency of it - even on screen.<sup>70</sup> And my mind doesn't go towards meaning making, it doesn't sort of want to ... particularly. So I don't particularly arrive at 'The Red Show Boy', or things like that, but there is something else that's holding me ...*

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<sup>70</sup> I am referring here to my viewing of video documentation of *Invisible Dances in front of people watching* (1999), *Prelude* (Bock & Vincenzi (2004b) at Live Art and *Here As If They Hadn't been, As If They Are Not* (Bock & Vincenzi (2006b).

**FB:** But I think meaning ...things that resonate have a meaning. They have felt meaning without necessarily having ... well coming with a whole narrative somehow. And I think that's what Simon does so well - finding an image that has so much; that isn't a flat image; that has so much depth and opens to so many meaningful spaces - somehow. It's so many things at the same time.

**RI:** *So was there a sense during the process of, 'Ah this kind of moment has this kind of quality to it'? My [earlier] question was to do with the way that 'meaning' became more important. Were there decisions around certain processes that carried the kind of [affective] power that you are describing?*

**FB:** Yes. And then there was the way that these things overlapped and collided and you'd just sort of see people inhabiting each other's dreams almost (or something).... You'd suddenly see sort of these collisions that would leave you – leave me – feeling aghast watching it. Where something really slowed down ... somebody doing material at the back. About falling, and being abandoned, giving over to abandonment in the body. And then she's physically fallen over ... but has to continue. And that continuing in where she is - in that way becomes this terrible pleading image within it. Which just happened in that particular performance.

**RI:** *And that [the pleading] is nothing to do with what she's doing I mean where her attention is ...*

**FB:** No. She's fulfilling everything she just has to do. She happened to be on her knees in that moment because she didn't see that she had hit somebody else and didn't know what had happened. She was wearing a hood over her face. So ... I think that was where meaning emerged ... and that was always so exciting for us to see ... [how meaning would] constantly emerge.

**RI:** *So the performer is not presupposing what she is doing. She's totally in an immersive perceptual engagement ...*

**FB:** Yes

**RI:** *And even when you describe the structure of the work there isn't any intent to set up a particular image. It may arise...*

**FB:** You'd often have to work against aestheticizing moments. So you'd think, 'Oh actually a wonderful thing would be to have this here now ... to put someone in the space and do...'

If there were choices to be made about where to place someone in the space, we'd talk a great deal about working against certain aesthetic or spatial conventions. You know [we'd work against] aestheticizing what was there. I think it was so held already - in some way.... We'd work with just seeing if there was a way of just making decisions and seeing what happened without too much setting things up.

**RI:** *So what keeps coming forward is the perceptual engagement in the task in a sense?*

**FB:** Yes. Yes.

**RI:** *In The Kaai Theatre interview, you said something like, 'There isn't a blindness that doesn't presuppose a particular language.' I was wondering about that. You then said 'a way of responding that we could translate' [Kaai Theatre no date b]. Do you remember this?*

**FB:** Yes. We did a block where we worked with four blind performers. And I think at one point we very naively thought that there was some kind of shared set of things about their experience (the four blind performers), a kind of unifying relationship to blindness and physicality, or blindness and perception. And they were, all of them, 99% without sight. People who are blind often have some vision. And of course it's a bit embarrassing [to have had that thought of unifying relationship]. They were all completely different people and they had such different experiences of going out into the world. Who they were and how they had arrived at that was completely unique to each of them. We chose to work with two in the final piece. Their material was the most developed. Our starting point was, 'Oh it would be really interesting to see what (you know performers closing their eyes and working with perception) to see what a blind language would be. And of course it was completely naive.

**RI:** *Oh I see. So this was in relation to you or I closing our eyes.*

**FB:** Yes

**RI:** *So when you said 'there isn't a blindness that doesn't presuppose' you meant that we can't be blind because we already have seen, and perhaps also because we still have sight - that kind of thing?*

**FB:** Yes. And also presupposing about the blind performers that we were going to work with.

**RI:** *Were you intentionally working against presuppositions in these processes? Or was that something you became more aware of in the doing?*

**FB:** I think we were trying to work as phenomenologically as possible. I mean we'd try to work from what was happening and the performers experience of it as they did it. And we did a lot of doing and talking, and talking and doing. And then we'd try and audio describe for the blind performers in the room and we kept coming up against the limitations of that. We'd go and look at audio description. What was your question?

**RI:** *I was wondering about how much concern there was to not be presupposing in the perceptual action.*

**FB:** We'd try to find it from within basically, from within the experience. And then, I mean like any language, it becomes codified ... and we'd start shaping the rules. For example the abandoned material actually only worked when you were on your feet. You can't go to the floor and keep doing it – be falling while you are lying on your back. Somehow it didn't work. So we'd say, 'Yes, you're falling in the interior spaces of your body, going wherever that



movement goes in the chambers inside the body. But actually, don't go to the floor.' So ...  
we'd be quite prescriptive in a way.

[laughter]

**RI:** *Pragmatic?*

**FB:** Pragmatic [agreeing]. Yes. It being on floor just wouldn't work in terms of what we were opening up - in terms of relationship to something.... You know we'd set up: what does it mean to lose the room? What do we need to do to lose the room? What are the physical stages of losing the room? That was the very early days. How do we lose the room before we then find the interior space? You know I think it was our cassettes, with interior body sounds, didn't come for quite a few days, so we started lots of exercises that asked these questions, and over quite a number of days looking at: what are the stages of losing the room? ... leading and being led ... or just becoming attuned to the idea of following. We did a huge amount of tasks around following, people trying to find ways of leading in as many kind of contact ways as possible, in the lightest of ways, to just somehow sensitize or attune everyone to the idea of when these mythical tapes did finally arrive we'd sort of find a relationship to following; a relationship to losing the room; a relationship to battling with verticality. So that in a way is some of the things we'd be dealing with.

**RI:** *At one point you all learned one dance - Navraj's dance [Navraj Sidhu]. Did that stay as part of the repertoire – and in the form of a repeated piece?*

**FB:** Yes. It became the one that Nanette did very fast. But in a number of presentations three of us would do it. We were really interested in this same abandoned material - three people with radio head phones would suddenly all go into unison ... a kind of unison ... with a language that completely defied that. That became quite exciting for a while.

**RI:** *Which Act did that happen in?*

**FB:** It didn't happen in the final thing in the end. It happened in the Purcell Rooms [*Invisible Dances... in front of people watching* (1999)] with two people doing it. And it happened somewhere else. But it didn't happen in the final show.

And in a way we found that with the trio doing the street journeys, we had that sense of unison that we needed within the piece, and didn't need to have it with Navraj's dance. Somehow you could still see that vocabulary, but just by having it in different time things, it became something else. So this need for some kind of unison element was taken over by another material, by another company within the show. The abandoned material in unison evolved into Nanette doing, what became known as, the Navraj dance in the three different ways [discussed above]. It still looked like the abandoned material – but yes – it was something else

**RI:** *And quite a different question now. Then you stopped. You stopped making work at the end of that.*

**FB:** Yes we did. Well I did. I had begun my training as a therapist in 2001 – in the course of *Invisible Dances*. And it was quite hard to do. In some ways it was difficult. In 2005-6 I finished my training and started to see clients, and I just couldn't give the blocks of time that I needed. It was alright when I wasn't working so much in this new area of work – but then I just started doing more and couldn't ... I just couldn't sort of do this at weekends. It really needs blocks of time. It needs immersive time, time to just go away and just follow something rigorously. So I struggled with it towards the end just to give it what I wanted to give it. *Invisible Dances* had so much of its own energy so I could go on .... I realized that I couldn't make new work in that way any more in that kind of ... (pause)

**RI:** *Totally immersive way?*

**FB:** Yes. So I'll just have to find a different way or relationship to making work... Of course Simon continued. So it was largely to do with that. Yes. I miss it ... Yes ... I mean it was amazing *Invisible Dances* but it was also exhausting ...

**RI:** *And an incredibly long and really engaged project - with very few showings. There were showings at the end of each research block informally, but in terms of the [finished] works actually being seen.*

**FB:** I know. There weren't many.

**RI:** *It does sound like it was incredible work. Maybe it was a bit before its time?*

**FB:** It became so big ... it needed people to really love it and get it. And there are so few of those people around in a way ...

**RI:** *Possibly 'Invisible Dances' was 'new' in British dance/choreography in the way that it staged perceptual immersion ...*

**FB:** I mean I wonder whether ... I think maybe it referred too much to theatre ... it occupied its own place somewhere between theatre and dance, or was less concerned with what forms it occupied... I knew we were asking a lot from an audience ... in some ways.

I wish we had had more opportunities. We never really understood that it wasn't wanted more. We were very encouraged by the people who saw it. When those who now refer to the work describe it, it is particularly in reference to a certain performance – to the experience of it. As a result, its sense of being an event has become even stronger and clearer.

Sources:

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## Appendix 3

### An interview with Simon Vincenzi

on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 by Skype

Simon Vincenzi: **SV**

Rosanna Irvine: **RI**

**RI:** *Hello Simon. I'd like to talk with you about 'Invisible Dances'. I'm interested in how you conceived of 'Invisible Dances' at the start and particularly in terms of the different things that emerged like the book and the phone performance. At the beginning of the project to what extent did any sense of what particular outcome might be, exist?*

**SV:** Absolutely none. Frank and I had made I think four pieces together, all of them in quite tight rehearsal periods. I come from much more of a theatre background than Frank, with a lot of the work – not all of it but a lot of it - being text based. So it was very exciting for me to start the relationship with Frank and to start really an exploration of physical languages. It got frustrating because we were in rehearsal processes where things were coming out that I was really excited about and that I was wanting to develop more, but we had to keep stopping because we had to get a show on. So rehearsal periods were exciting but they were very frenetic. The work itself became quite wild a lot of the time - partly to do with that I think. So I was interested in setting up a period - initially two years – where we were looking at work outside the idea of making work for an audience: a research period and trying to take that research through seriously. One of the really important things for me, and Frank I think, was that we had no idea where this would end. We literally started with nothing other than the idea of this period of time. We had the sense that the research could happen anywhere and that we'd apply for any spaces or money to do that. But being located in one place wasn't important. And we wanted to keep with the thing of not knowing. So it all came from that in a way. We suspected that it would be useful to have some sort umbrella, a vague frame that was set up at the beginning; and because there was nothing we decided to use the word nothingness. And actually everything came from that word. And the two years became seven years (or whatever it was). That word changed from 'nothingness' to 'absence' as it developed but it was a very small shift.

And that word nothingness – we had no idea about what that really meant and it was more to do with the fact that we had nothing [laughter] in a practical sort of way. We had no money or spaces at that time. So it was ... slightly random.

The first block we had was at The Place and was to do with choreographers working with composers and we wanted to work on that with Luke Stoneham who we'd worked with on two projects before. And I said to Luke, "Is there anything that resonates for you with the idea of nothingness?" And he said, "I've always wanted to make work that only the performers hear - through head phones." And that was something that I had been interested in many years ago. And that's how it began. It was quite simple.

**RI:** *When you made work before with Frank, did you begin with an intention or theme?*

**SV:** Yes. The pieces really grew out of each other. With the first piece we were asked to make a piece for the South Bank, a ten minute piece. And because Frank was so tall I thought it would be funny if we worked with a little boy - just as a sort of joke really. And afterwards we thought, "What does this really mean? Why would you be on stage with this little person?" Somehow [the sense of] Frank looking back at himself and this little boy looking at himself in the future came into play - these two different view points. And then there were two other duets with Frank, two other *Forest Dances*: one where he was looking – mirroring himself really - at his own age and then one where we worked with an older actor. It was a triptych in which the pieces related to each other. Three different *Forest Dances*. And then when we finished the three I thought, "Oh, I think there's another one!" Each piece very much grew out of each other. But we sort of knew what they were. We knew that each was set in some kind of a forest; we knew the tone that each one would take; we knew that the first three were working with people who weren't dancers.

I knew that with the fourth *Forest Dance* - Being Barely There I Saw You Too - we wanted to work with people who had a dance training. It was very much about dance. And that we would start rehearsals with a large landscape of writing and music. A frame that we didn't necessarily understand.

**RI:** *When you came to this 'Invisible Dances' the word "nothingness" referred to the physical practical circumstances, of having nothing. Was it also to do with not wanting to bring a particular idea that already had a shape?*

**SV:** I'm sure it was. And there was probably quite a lot in *Forest Dances* that was to do with that sense of nothingness. And so there was a kind of clarifying of that somehow in *Invisible Dances*.

**RI:** *Was that conscious at the time, that sense of bringing something forward from 'Forest Dances'?*

**SV:** I think we knew we wanted to do something very different. We didn't know necessarily what it was.

The initial two years became five years. We sort of felt that we hadn't finished after two years. [In the beginning] we were working with I think three other dancers. And we were waiting for Luke to come up with the sounds. And so we just started working with our eyes closed a lot ... very, very long sessions with the performers ... and that became important for the process. And then later on we wanted to work with people who couldn't open their eyes. We wanted to work with people who had been blind for most of their lives – really to get another perspective about space ... about their relationship to space ... and movement. I think that the telephone piece came directly out of that.

I think that when we started to work with people who had no sight in a dance studio, and this sounds really stupid, we hadn't really taken on board that they couldn't really see! It was really traumatic the first time we worked with Tim Gebbels. Frank, Gill Lyons and myself [were each] thinking, 'there's something really awful going on here –

because we three can see what's going on but Tim can't.' So we quickly found ways to very quickly describe everything that was going on. There was always someone on description duty trying to describe for Tim what Frank or Gill was doing. It was quite practical in a way. Things that we were doing were quite complicated to describe. Tim had also talked about going to the theatre and having these very boring [audio] descriptions being given to him about what was happening on stage. So I started to think really if we were going to do a show it would have to be audio described somehow, and [we started thinking about] how that might be if it was a much more personable description, a much more poetic description. And so the telephone piece sort of came out of that, of us only describing what we could see – and exploring what that show could be... So [the telephone piece] grew very much out of the practicalities somehow ...

It was suggested that we work with Fiona Templeton - through Nicky Childs who was our project manager at Arts Admin. And I'd met Fiona. Frank and I had both seen an amazing piece of hers called *You, The City* that had been really important to us. But we didn't really know her. We talked with Nicky about what this voice for a telephone piece might be. And she'd said. "You know I think Fiona would be really interesting." Oh, and before that we'd asked Fiona to come and watch some stuff at one of the residencies at Nottdance and she'd ended up not being able to do that. And her name stayed with us. So we just asked her if she'd do the telephone piece. And it was quite a big production with eleven or thirteen people in it. We literally had no idea what Fiona would mouth.

**RI:** *Her voice was recorded?*

**SV:** Yes

**RI:** *And used without editing as the telephone piece?*

**SV:** Yes

**RI:** *And was it just Fiona's voice or did you also have the Medium?*

**SV:** The Medium was also recorded. For the two hours of the show Fiona was sat on one place. We said that she couldn't move from that place, and that The Medium could go where he wanted. So at times actually on the recording of Fiona you can hear The Medium standing behind her. He just happened sometimes to be standing behind her. [...] And you can hear the sound of the performers on stage, sort of back ground sound.

The book only came out of the fact that we liked what Fiona had done. I liked the idea somehow of her voice becoming a sort of place root somehow ... There was no moment when we said, "Oh we're going to make a book."

**RI:** *I'd like to talk about the different roles that you and Frank took. What did you feel your role was in the project?*

**SV:** [...] It's very complicated; it's hard to divide it. Because Frank was within the work and I was always outside the work (somehow) ... so I was always the person saying, "Oh

well ..." yes I guess trying to frame it. I always felt there were two voices one from within it from Frank, and one trying to frame it from the outside ... not the outside but

...

[...]

I think the way that Frank and I have always worked, and this goes back to working with Cosmo who was I think just six at the time. We wanted him in the first Forest Dance to be an equal, to contribute equally to the rehearsal process. And we wanted to use his qualities, and to allow him space. That's always just been important about how we have made work. It's a democratic space. And I guess for me (and this might be because I'm on the outside), it became very clear in *Invisible Dances*, that it's really important to me that everyone in that piece owns their work. You know the work has grown out of them, developed only because of their presence in the process.

[...]

We worked with a load of people over that time and all the shows, the show for the telephone and the show *in front of people watching*, became a sort of collision of languages and finding a sort of beautiful way through: and sort of placing these different thoughts, these different languages in the same space and seeing what happens, trusting that there was a relationship between them.

**RI:** *Can we talk about the shift from the work I saw [on DVD] at LADA, which was 'in front of people watching', to 'Prelude'? There's a lot of the same material I think - abandoned body, the journeying material, the speaking voice in 'in front of people watching' - the 'Hello is there anybody there'?*

**SV:** [...] The big shift was that *in front of people watching* was a sort of little thing by itself, it was sort of the first time we'd put things together in that way. The big shift between that and *Prelude* was that we knew literally that *Prelude* was a prelude. We knew already that we were going to do *L'Altrove* in Venice. We knew that was going to be quite big [...] and quite operatic, in its scale somehow. We knew that *Prelude* was going to be thirty minutes. And I wanted it somehow to give a sense, like a musical prelude, of things that would recur in the second act. We thought of *Prelude* as the first Act. We wanted little things to come in that would recur in Act 2 in a more emotional way, or operatic was the word that we used at the time.

There was a character called The 'Black Show Boy'. It was a character that Fiona described in the telephone piece - so he grew from her imagination. I know where he came from but he wasn't in that show. But I was really interested in him as a character. So he became the linking character between the three Acts of *Invisible Dances*. And in *Prelude*, literally for the whole of *Prelude*, he's in the wings of the space with a certain kind of physicality. And when that character moves into the centre of the space to present himself, that is when the piece stops.

*Prelude* had quite a complicated ... internal structure ... it was very different from *In Front Of People Watching*, which was much more innocent in a way, and was a real experiment ... we had no idea what we had done with that [with *in front of people watching*]. And the reaction to it was quite extreme, which was a surprise to us. With *Prelude* we knew that we had this big other Act, Act 2, that we would be doing later on in the year, and another Act after that. So these internal structurings started to be present in *Prelude*.

The second Act, *L'Altrove*, was split into three acts. Actually I'm not sure if I knew this when we were working on *Prelude*, but it became apparent ... I knew that *L'Altrove* would be three hours because I knew there was going to be a translation into Italian of the telephone piece on a screen. So there was a character on video, listening to the telephone piece trying to transcribe it to Italian. So I wanted the telephone piece to structure the middle section. That was two hours. And then, the first act was called the 'Black Show Boy'. And it was the character who literally walked onto the stage at the end of *Prelude*, framing what the people were about to see - sort of announcing that what they were going to see was a show. I wanted someone to allow the audience into the space - to announce it. And then the third Act grew out of our work with another blind performer called Mike Taylor. And that was to do with what had come out of working with him and a certain type of video projection we'd experimented with. It was just one, in a way very simple, image of just him in a light that he was controlling. It was very very beautiful and very very still. Somehow I knew I wanted to use it, as counterpoint

[...]

When we were doing *L'Altrove* we knew that there would probably be a tour the following year and I thought it the touring piece]would be very much like *L'Altrove*. But once we did *L'Altrove* there were things that I wanted to feed into the third act (which was called *Here, As If They Hadn't Been, As If They Are Not.*) One of those things was ... well ... in a way *L'Altrove* presented itself in quite a glorious way. And I wanted the third act to sort of kill the project off, because we knew that we couldn't carry on doing it [laughing] because seven years is quite a long time in anyone's boots. So we were wanting to feed things in that would somehow kill it off. The showing of the final act would insist on it not being shown again. It still had three Acts but there were some quite big shifts; it was wilder, I think it was darker. There was something more destructive about it. The shifts were imperceptible perhaps but they were there ...

**RI:** *I also want to ask on a practical level about funding coming through for the project; how was it possible to begin with the intention of two years of research?*

**SV:** The first year, and I think I said before, we would just apply wherever. And at that time a lot of the dance agencies would give residencies. We really tried to tap into that. But also it was really exhausting. Even though they were just research periods, we'd done sort of eight or ten applications for four different residencies. We tried to go to places that had money. But a lot of those places would just give accommodation or per diems. So actually people were very often working for no money. And that was ... for me that was an amazing thing - that there were people who had actually been on the project for seven years ... and gave of themselves in that way ...

And we applied for both Arts Council funding and Nesta funding for the big show. We got the Nesta on condition that we got the Arts Council and the Arts Council didn't give us it. So, after the telephone piece it was quite sort of awful. And then this one application came through from Romeo Castelluci who was curating the Venice Biennale the next year and who was wanting proposals. And he spoke about wanting proposals in a very particular way. I said that this will be the last application we will do. We will apply for this but it will be the last one. And he took the project on instantly. So that's how it became part of the Biennale and that's also how we got the money to do Act 3.



**RI:** *And from The Arts Council too at that point?*

**SV:** Yes

**RI:** *I notice that you had a lot of commissioned texts, commissioned interviews. Was that strategic on your part, in terms of generating a certain discourse around the work?*

**SV:** [...] We wanted people to also have a verbal, or textual, input. A lot of the work was so internal; and private in a way. We wanted these voices from the outside to literally talk about what they had seen. And rather than relying or being interested in a dance or theatre critic, it was a decision that we asked artist to respond. And we would say, "You can respond in whatever way ..."

**RI:** *So that was part of the larger process of the project?*

**SV:** Yes, well we never knew what they would come up with ... Yes just asking for outside thoughts, literally how they looked at the work. [...] We wanted an artist's view on it. And in a way the work was internally theoretical – there was nothing clever in it. It was very intuitive and very thoughtful. But I wanted to have similar views. So I wanted someone with similar views...

**RI:** *You mean not someone who would be clever 'about' it?*

**SV:** Yes. I mean not someone who would talk about Derrida for pages and pages. There were lots of things that people could have talked about – which can be really great sometimes, but I didn't want to hear that voice.

**RI:** *So at the point you had people like Joe Kelleher and Nicholas Ridout and Martin Hargreaves ... they are more academic ... But I guess they are writing differently, with a different kind of sympathy to arts practice ... maybe less distanced?*

**SV:** Well ... with Martin, we asked Martin to write something and he did write something for the book something that we found too complicated and asked him if he wouldn't mind re-writing it [laughter], which he did and he completely understood what the thing was.

With Nick and Joe, they are academics but for me they are two really extraordinary academics whose work comes out of the act of looking at theatre. Even though they are both fantastically bright, incredibly brainy and incredibly well read, it never stops their relationship of being in a theatre responding to work. And I learned from their voices in a way. And Nick and Joe, they'd seen the work before, and they were leading a workshop at the Venice Biennale, with students from Bologne, about *how* you respond.

**RI:** *I'd like to ask you about the shift from 'nothingness' to 'absence' that you spoke of earlier. My sense before speaking with you today, was that the shift happened with Martin Hargreaves' writing on the work and his naming of 'absence' in 2001 [...] I*

*wonder if in your sense it was a consequence of someone else's reading, like Martin, or if it was your reading being outside looking?*

**SV:** I can't really remember. It might have been. It probably was. I think the word 'absence' came into another showing somewhere ... but the more we did we realized that actually ... what the performers were presenting wasn't 'nothing.' What they were presenting was quite large languages and that somehow what linked everything was the sense that the 'script' for that was the thing that was 'absent.' So that the performers were always responding to something that the audience might not see or hear. It became clearer to me and I think to Frank. There was something that Frank always talked about, in the big shows, those shows never really existed in the theatre that they were being presented in. The performers were still in the studios of Nottdance, or in the streets of Leeds. So there was this sense, the further we went along, of the absence of the different spaces. So the absence of the space that the performers were looking at became clearer ... rather than saying, 'It's about nothing.' It didn't really feel as if it was about nothing. [...] 'Absence' became a more important word than 'nothingness.'

**RI:** *I can really sense that, almost like a literalness of absence in the way that you describe what's there that is not visible for a public watching but is insisting on being there for the performer.*

**SV:** Yes. I mean I guess it also came out of when we started doing the big shows and we were having to talk as a company about what we were doing, and that absence became a more useful word

**RI:** *Thank you Simon!*

## Appendix 4

### An interview with Fiona Templeton

on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013 by Skype

...this is what is happening...

Fiona Templeton: **FT**

Rosanna Irvine: **RI**

**RI:** *Hello Fiona. I'd like to talk with you about your experience of watching Invisible Dances... A Show That Will Never Be Shown. First can you talk a little about the background and about your own practice at that time which was about ten years ago.*

**FT:** Right, what was I doing ten years ago?

**RI:** *Or your interests.*

**FT:** I was working on a very new project which has only recently come to its final completion [*The Medead* premiered at Roulette Brooklyn in December 2012]<sup>71</sup> to do with ... There is an ostensible narrative which is based on the journey of the figure of Medea in ancient myth, not just Greek myth. A couple of things I was interested in there were the exploration of language - not necessarily to communicate directly but as a collapsing of several languages - and I don't want to use the word deconstruction, but taking apart or exploding of metaphors that we had become very used to. That might sound very abstract but for example looking at myth and the figure of the centaur we have this instant image, but if you say a man that is a horse the image disappears and you have to think a bit more about it - so that is one of the things I am doing with language. The performance work is in six parts, and ten years ago I was at the stage of really wrestling with the text so that is basically what was going on for me. One other thing that was going on for me in 2003 was that I was doing a large-scale site specific work [*L'Ille*] for the city of Lille, for the opening of Lille 2004. It was the European cultural capital and [the piece] was to do with talking to people in Lille about their dreams which were then going to be staged in the places they had dreamed about or as close as possible, [and with those people] also being production advisors. It was staged as a journey for the audience. Those were the two things [that I was doing] and both of them had to do with the subconscious in some way.

**RI:** *I believe it was Nicky Childs who suggested you to Bock & Vincenzi. Did you know their work prior to that and did you know them, did you know 'Invisible Dances'?*

**FT:** I had never seen *Invisible Dances* because I had been living mostly in the States leading up to that period. I knew of Simon or we were on friendly terms but I didn't really know him and similarly with Frank we sort of knew each other.

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<sup>71</sup> *The Medead* was published by Roof Books, New York in 2014.

**RI:** *Was there something about the invitation that particularly interested you?*

**FT:** Yes. I was fascinated by Simon's description of the work. We talked a lot leading up to the show, and to me the idea of describing the invisible was very interesting. But so was the way in which Simon made quite complex interwoven worlds around his work, and still does in the recent project – the Doctor Mabuse one.<sup>72</sup> So that interested me, but also we talked about making the text for *The Medead*. I didn't write it. I spoke it into a tape recorder and I did that often in a state between being awake and being asleep. That is not the only way it was produced, but it was all spoken and I was interested in the different kinds of text that speaking generates so in a way Simon's proposition tied into my interests at the time.

**RI:** *So you knew that your task was to witness and to give a spoken account of their show. You knew that you would be the sole audience member, and witness for a future audience who would access the show through your account of it?*

**FT:** I didn't know what the show was going to look like and Simon was quite careful not to let me know. And even though I had seen a rehearsal, the rehearsal wasn't the whole show and it certainly wasn't the time of the whole show. What I didn't know [was that] there wouldn't be a break or a cease in the action. Although there was an interval, things were still happening. I quite liked the way Simon ... in a way his whole approach to work is performative. Those facts that he didn't tell me. Everything was very deliberate. That was a directorial choice of his not just a contract of: you are going to do this thing and that is going to be the text. That is interesting.

**RI:** *How did you approach it?*

**FT:** The way I had to approach it was ... I didn't decide beforehand how to do it because I thought there was no point in doing that because the interesting thing about it was being in the present and being confronted by something which, knowing Simon's work, would have a lot of process behind it that wasn't necessarily overtly visible on the surface. I knew that was part of what I would inevitably be talking about, but at the same time I was to talk about what I was seeing. What I did was think through beforehand a very wide range of verbal strategies, which were quickly exhausted by the time [frame] of the show. So I had to come up with a lot more on the spot and just let it happen to me in the process. Because I had been using the means of writing by talking into a tape recorder - that work on *The Medead* - and the previous work called *Cells of Release* [1995] which involved writing on a continuous strip of paper woven in and out through the cells of a cell block in an abandoned prison, I had been thinking a lot about the nature of text that was forced not to look back at itself and what kind of thinking that created. In a way there was a different kind of patterning that comes because you can't just look back at the top of page. That pattern was similar to the way patterning happens in oral poetry. I knew that would inevitably happen although I

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<sup>72</sup> From 2007 Vincenzi has been working on *Operation Infinity* "a series of theatre works that inhabit different spaces and time frames" producing four works to date: *The Infinite Pleasure of the Great Unknown* (2008) (with Frank Bock), *Naked Singularities* (2011), *King Real Against the Guidelines* (2013) and *Luxuriant* (2013) (Arts Admin. no date, b).

didn't know how it would happen. I knew that I would have sonic strategies inevitably because it was spoken.

**RI:** *At the beginning you said you were giving an account of what you were 'seeing.' And was this really highlighted in terms of your task?*

**FT:** Yes. What Simon told me, what I was to do, was describe the show because I was the only person who was seeing it, to tell people what was happening. I didn't want to interpret very much. If something struck me immediately in a way that I saw something that maybe wasn't there, I might still say it but because the work was very repetitive and had very subtle changes within that repetition. Just describing images was another strategy that was quickly exhausted. The metaphoric goes in and out of the text but it is not the main thing. I was trying to stick with what am I looking at and how am I doing my job of looking at it and talking about it. There are times, I think you probably know, in the text after a couple of hours it descends into lallation, babble. But that seemed an appropriate response because in a way it wasn't just that words were impossible, it also seemed like a reflection of some of the action.

**RI:** *I was going to ask you about working with unedited text production and you have already spoken about that, about text that doesn't look back on itself. This was a strategy or a means of producing text that you were already occupied with in *The Medead*. Was this a live production spoken into a microphone?*

**FT:** No, it was a way of producing the text but I didn't do it live. I had on other occasions done live producing of text but that sounds strange as you might think why that is not the same as improvising. But it is. I did something at the Clock Tower in New York where I just spoke for about eight hours. (No wonder I have got a sore throat!) Of course it was improvising but rather than improvising in any theatrical way it was ... how can I put it? Really trying to be in the moment and not think beforehand what I was going to talk about. In fact the 'about' kept disappearing - that was the reason I gave myself eight hours because I wanted to get through the initial dross of produced thoughts. It wasn't particularly about thinking it was about speaking.

**RI:** *The piece in the abandoned prison [*Cells of Release*] this was also operating in a similar way with writing?*

**FT:** Not quite because there was a direct content there. The piece was in collaboration with Amnesty International and although that was a separate layer to what my work was, the whole thing was a sort of meditation on human violence to other humans and notions of imprisonment, forced enclosure, interiority and exteriority. Some of it becomes quite overtly related to the topic and other parts are more abstract or more meditative. It is quite long. I did it over six weeks every day.

**RI:** *Did working on 'Invisible Dances' bear an influence on your on-going work or how did it meet with the interest you have described?*

**FT:** One thing that was part of my experience, and I think I talk about this in the text, is the responsibility to the listener. Most of the other times when I used the production of text just by speaking, I played with the use of silence or would allow silence to

happen when I didn't necessarily have 'something to say'. With *Invisible Dances* I felt like I should keep speaking because I felt my voice was a line of connection. It is the nature of the telephone - if there is nobody speaking then the whole thing isn't working. So that necessity to speak is very Beckett - to speak even when there is nothing to say. I really experienced that when I was doing *Invisible Dances* and I found that very interesting.

**RI:** *Is there anything that you think is relevant or something that was strong in your experience of the work that we haven't addressed?*

**FT:** What we haven't addressed is what I was seeing but of course that is in the text. One of the experiences of producing the text was not just producing the text but looking at something in order to produce the text about it. And one of the things that became clear was anything can be described in innumerable ways. There is just, 'Oh I am looking at that so this is a description of it' - because I was essentially describing something. It is not that it didn't change, it changed constantly, but the changes were not narrative and not representational so what was I describing? Sometimes even in movement there wasn't that much change, and then there were occasional events but, as with a lot of Simon's work, the events were self-erasing. I think it was also a real meditation on Simon's thinking: of necessity, by trying to describe what he had made over a long period you went in and out of understanding a lot about his work. For example there was one figure who, to me, was more of an event. I think I say in the text something about him being "The Messenger" [in Bock & Vincenzi 2004a: 31] which was the figure that Simon described as The Messenger.<sup>73</sup> He came in several times as if something was going to happen and funnily enough that is one of the visually strongest things in my memory as if something is going to happen but the only thing that happened was he came in - essentially.

[...]

I think the way Simon composes the piece consists of withdrawing the event but giving you the expectation in a very beautifully orchestrated form. He really understands time in that sense.

**RI:** *And your experience of time over two hours folded in, in some way?*

**FT:** Or growing out of it – yes. There were other images. For example another single performer, who wasn't doing what the larger group were doing, was at the front and was erasing himself.<sup>74</sup> So that is another of Simon's strategies in that work which happened in the text as well. The constant return, or the patterning [that] was in Simon's work - that structure helped me to some extent.

**RI:** *So it became a strategy for you, or a permission for you, to follow his line of thought and then for it to dissolve or erase itself.*

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<sup>73</sup> Frank Bock talks about the way that the performer Tim Gebbels became "a sort of Greek messenger" (Bock, F. 2012: 212. Interview with author. See appendix 2).

<sup>74</sup> Frank Bock talks about this figure: "someone doing a sort of strip and then colouring themselves in black and [so] disappearing. So they would 'reveal' themselves and then over the two hours would paint themselves black and so 'disappear.'" (Bock, F. 2012: 212. Interview with author. See appendix 2).

**FT:** Not even a permission, it was just - this is what is happening...

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